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"If any  
"I will

J. & A

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# Draughts from the Living Fountain:

BEING

## EXPOSITIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH

FOR EVERY SABBATH IN THE YEAR.

BY

REV. HENRY POPE, JR.,

MINISTER OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA.

WITH AN

### INTRODUCTION

BY REV. JAMES R. NARRAWAY, A. M.

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.”—CHRIST.

“I will take the cup of Salvation.”—DAVID.

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### VOLUME I.

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SAINT JOHN, N. B.

J. & A. M'MILLAN, PRINTERS, PRINCE WILLIAM STREET.

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of Agriculture.

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TO  
THE CONGREGATION  
WORSHIPPING IN THE CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH, SAINT  
JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, WITH WHOM HE WAS SO HAPPILY  
ASSOCIATED AS THEIR PASTOR, WHEN IT PLEASED PRO-  
VIDENCE TO LAY HIM ASIDE FROM HIS SACRED AND  
RESPONSIBLE DUTIES BY SEVERE AND PRO-  
TRACTED AFFLICTION; AND IN GRATE-  
FUL REMEMBRANCE OF WHOSE MANY  
EXPRESSIONS OF WARM AND  
PRACTICAL SYMPATHY  
FOR HIM;  
THESE VOLUMES,  
WHICH ARE THE PRODUCTS  
OF SUCH ENFORCED RETIREMENT  
FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF A BUSY  
LIFE, ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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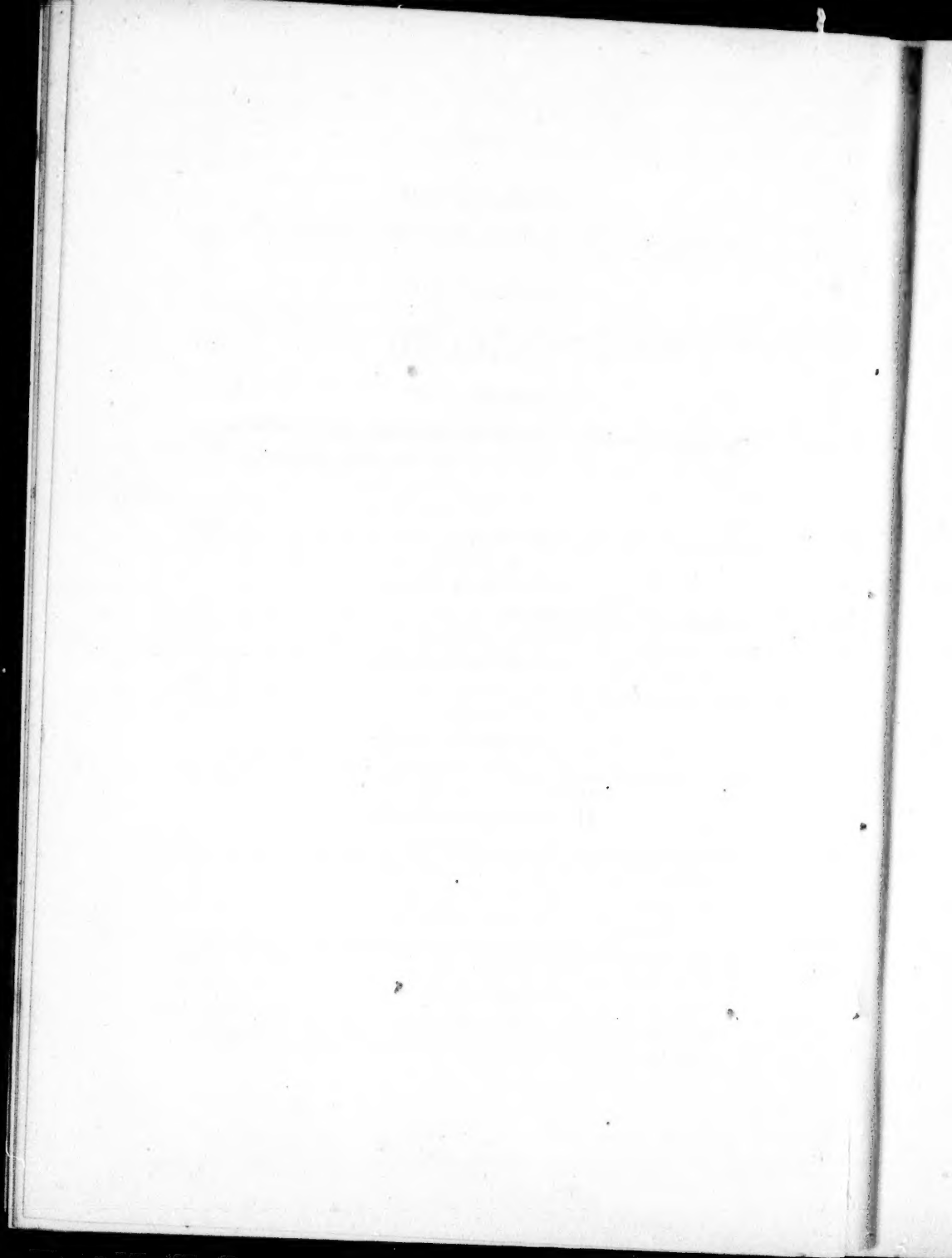
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE author of these Volumes needs, from the writer's pen, no introduction to the Christian public of the Maritime Provinces. Within their bounds he is widely known to his co-religionists, and to very many persons pertaining to communions other than his own; and is known as favourably as widely. He is recognized as a man vigorous in intellect and cultured in taste; and as a minister, able and zealous, on whose labours in many fields the blessing of the Divine Father has rested richly, and whose character, capacity and services have elicited from the pastorate of his Church, time and again, tokens of high appreciation. He takes rank in his denomination as one of its most effective preachers in the Lower Provinces, and thousands have been edified by his pulpit ministrations. Genial and gentlemanly, too, in the social circle, and imbued with a Catholic spirit toward all the members of the Christian brotherhood, it has been his good fortune to command the love as well as the respect of those enjoying his acquaintance.

Such a man, we repeat, requires no introduction for himself or his sermons to that large circle of readers by which these Volumes will be cordially welcomed, and with pleasure and profit perused. Therefore, in penning these remarks, which, rather by courtesy than by right are entitled an Introduction, the writer feels he is performing a work of supererogation, though, at the same time, a labour of love.



The circumstances under which this series of Sermons meets the public eye, are such as to awaken the affectionate sympathies of all those Christian souls to whom their author has so often, from the pulpit, spoken in his Master's name, words of courage, counsel and comfort. These Discourses are a contribution to pulpit literature for the edification of the Church from suffering supernumeraryship. Prepared under the pressure of weakness, weariness and pain, they come from the silence of the sick chamber.

But no allowance is required for them on that account. They show no signs of debility either in thought or expression. They are neither morbid nor fretful in tone. They abound in solid, wholesome matter, and sound thinking; are forcible throughout, strictly orthodox, according to the Methodist interpretation of that word; and, best of all, are full of Christ. Their language, always vigorous, is often eloquent. They are not mere frigid, moral essays, nor unimpassioned disquisitions on speculative questions, nor profitless displays of rhetorical brilliancies. Neither are they weak dilutions of evangelical sentiment. They are instinct with gospel life, marked by pungency of appeal, and manifestly aimed at saving results. They are gemmed with quotations from the Word which abideth forever; and these, unlike Orient pearls at random strung, are carefully selected and skilfully inlaid in the fitting places, to give point to an appeal, force to an argument, or proof to an assertion. In a word, they are fitted to do good, and, it is believed, they will do it.

These Volumes will be prized in very many congregations as memorials of a pastor held in loving remembrance for his work's sake in other days. They will also be valued for their intrinsic worth, wherever they make their appearance. No one can read them thoughtfully without having his desire to live a godly life quickened, or without feeling his spirit stirred and impelled Christward. Various in theme,

yet on whatever point of the evangelical circle the preacher may take up a position, in this sermon or that, the sacrificial cross remains full in view—the grand central figure in the panorama.

These Volumes are well adapted for Sunday reading in the family. In rural sections especially, where sanctuary privileges are not plentiful, but yet liable to interruption at inclement seasons, a profitable devotional service might, by the aid of these sermons, be conducted on numerous Sabbaths in the year in a thousand Maritime Province households.

Still more useful might these Discourses prove in the hands of a public reader in settlements scantily supplied with gospel preaching. Short, strong and practical, they might be read on the Lord's day to congregations only now and then favoured with pulpit services; and, by their use in this way, public worship in such localities might be held on every Sabbath to the profit of all concerned.

These Volumes constitute an interesting contribution to Canadian literature, yet in its incipient stages. As such, apart from all other considerations mentioned, they deserve to be warmly welcomed by the Canadian public. The subjects on which they dwell are of surpassing interest; and the treatment is grave, earnest, practical, and scholarly. They should be widely circulated in the great English-speaking Province of Ontario, and find numerous readers among the English-speaking portions of the people of Quebec. And, without question, they will meet with appreciation as a Canadian product, south of the boundary line.

It is to be hoped that the accomplished author may be spared many years, with renovated health, to perform with energy and success the full work of the ministry. Yet he must feel even now that his enforced retirement from the pulpit, trying as it has been, has brought him compensating advantages. It has enabled him anew to test the value of

those consolations which it has been his joy to tender in behalf of the compassionate Redeemer to so many of God's suffering children. And he cannot but feel grateful to the great Head of the Church for placing within his reach, during his retirement, the fruitful opportunity which it is the object of these Volumes to improve. That improvement involves the rendering of precious services to the best of all causes. There are few convictions more dear to a good man's heart than the well-founded belief that he is not living in vain, but is really contributing his mite to the elevation of his race, and to the establishment upon earth of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, whose right it is to reign with undivided authority over every human intellect and in every human heart. This cheering conviction is vouchsafed to the man who, in this work, draws refreshing draughts from living fountains for parched and thirsty lips. Long after he has laid himself down to his final rest, and while he is sleeping softly and safely under the unsleeping care of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, his spirit will live and plead in these sermons with power and pathos for his Saviour and his God. How inspiring the thought of such a fact!

This, it is trusted, will not prove the last literary venture of the author, however early he may be privileged to rejoin the effective ranks of the ministry, in which labour is abundant and leisure scanty.

It may be expected that the publication of these Volumes will stimulate to unwonted activity the literary faculty which is so largely shared by many of the author's fellow-ministers of his Church in Eastern British America. Hitherto that faculty has not been much exercised in the book-producing line. But the fine example set in this work will, doubtless, be emulated in due time.

J. R. NARRAWAY.

## GREAT MERCY FOR GREAT SINNERS.

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### SERMON I.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."—ISAIAH i. 18.

THE scene presented to our view in this chapter is solemnly magnificent ; nor can we contemplate it without having our thoughts carried forward to the morn of the resurrection-day when the "great white throne" shall be reared in the expanse of heaven, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. By the sanctified rhetoric of the Prophet the universe of God is converted into a Court of Justice, and a judicial process is represented as being conducted between Jehovah—the aggrieved plaintiff, on the one hand, and the rebellious house of Israel, as the defendant, on the other. In a manner most grand and imposing the Prophet invokes the Heavens and the Earth to hear the grave charges which the great God has to prefer against Israel. The indictment is read, in which the sins of His offending people are distinctly

specified. No mention is made of any defence having been set-up—but in the language of our Text, the righteous Lord speaks as though the case had been fully investigated, and the result had been that their sins had been proved to be as scarlet, and red like unto crimson. Just at this solemn crisis when their guilt would oppress them, and pale fear blanch every cheek, and cause every knee to tremble in apprehension of merited and immediate punishment, the voice of the God of mercy is heard making this generous proposal to the terror-stricken host: “Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins *be* as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they *be* red like crimson, they shall be as wool!”

Would to God, my hearers, that the charges preferred against Israel in the days of Isaiah were not so explanatory of the character and conduct of the majority of mankind in these later days! Would to God that the charges did not apply to any of ourselves! Alas! are there not many in this house who know and feel that they are verily guilty in the sight of God? To *you* divine mercy speaks as to those of olden time, saying: “Come now and let us reason together,” &c., &c. This gracious overture of Heaven offers three topics for our consideration, viz.: “Great Sinners,” “Gracious Counsel,” and “Abounding Mercy.”

1. *Great Sinners.* Such were they, addressed by Jehovah in these words. Note the terms used to give us some faint idea of the enormity of their crimes—

"Sins as scarlet," "red like crimson." How strongly expressive of exceeding sinfulness! This language signifies "double-stained or tinted," and is descriptive of great transgressors who are vile in all the constituents of their nature, and more polluted still in the vicious abandonment of their lives. And what do you suppose the parties under review were guilty of? In the preceding context there are no less than six heinous offences charged against them—all of which we may consider, that we may ascertain how far any or all of them may be justly preferred against ourselves.

The first on the list is "*Ingratitude.*"

"I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me!" Parents who have wayward, prodigal children, know how to appreciate this figure, for they have felt

"How, sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child!"

These Israelites were the children of God, not only because He had given, and graciously continued their natural and national existence, but also, and chiefly on account of His having chosen them from the rest of mankind, and nourished them, by the bestowment upon them of many and exalted religious privileges. "But they forgot God and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation," and thus proved themselves basely ungrateful.

Is not this charge applicable to many of you who have sinned and are yet sinning against great and manifold mercies and privileges kindly conferred upon you by your Heavenly Father? Many of you have had pious parents and other friends. Their godly example—their fervent prayers in your behalf—their wise and faithful counsels—and, in some instances, their dying entreaties—have been among the means employed by a gracious God to win your confidence and love. You have been surrounded by religious society, and moving in a circle favorable to piety have seen true religion beautifully exemplified in the lives of many who have daily come under your observation. Your lot has not been cast amid associations where to requite the kindness of Heaven would involve great self-denial and expose to numerous hardships and terrifying dangers. From your earliest recollection your feet have stately stood within the gates of the sanctuary, and your ears have heard the Gospel message delivered with plainness, fidelity, and affection, by the ministers of Christ. Perhaps there are among you some to whom God has spoken by affliction in reproof of your rebellion, and when you promised amendment He has kindly delivered you out of your trouble—comforted you in your bereavement, or raised you up from what seemed likely to be your dying bed! After all this vast and varied goodness of the Lord toward you, you are still saying to Him: “Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy

ways!" If this be not Ingratitude I know not where to find it!

The second charge on the list is "*Ignorance of God.*" "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know." To be wilfully ignorant of God our Creator, Proprietor, Benefactor, and all-loving Redeemer, is unnatural—is unreasonable, is monstrously wicked! The argument is from the less to the greater—from the sluggish ox, and the proverbially obstinate ass, to thoughtful, intelligent man. The ox and the ass do what might not be expected from creatures of their inferior endowments,—but men, little less than Gods in their lofty investiture of nature and grace, prove sadly recreant to all Heaven's claims upon them for honorable recognition and filial love and devotion. Are there not before me those who are thus practically without the knowledge of God? You have the Bible, and read it too—but read it, perchance only to hush the voice of remonstrant conscience—or, worse than that, to seek some flaw by which you may invalidate its claims upon the faith and love of mankind. You have sat in the sanctuary—not to worship God but to admire the talent, criticise the message or the messenger of God—or, perhaps, simply to do as others—or appear at least as good as other people. It must have been of such persons St. Paul wrote: "Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame!"

The third on the list of charges is, "*Inconsidera-*



tion." "My people doth not consider." In proportion as men act inconsiderately, or speak without premeditation and reflection, they speak and act foolishly, unprofitably, dangerously. The ordinary affairs of life demand, and repay us for the consideration with which we manage them, and shall men treat the all-momentous business of the soul's welfare, with no consideration at all? Yet such is the case every day. Men in their folly, allow *time*, and the *body*, and *earth* to monopolize their whole regards, and lose sight of the soul, and heaven, and eternity. They madly ignore God in their pleasures, purposes and pursuits. They sin, and consider not that He is the Omniscient witness of all their sins: that His eye is ever upon them: that "there is no darkness or secret place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves that He cannot see them." They consider not that He not only observes the way which they take, but searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men. They are profane and swear, yet consider not that God heareth the oath, and "will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." They indulge in falsehood—the lie is written in the ledger—uttered over the counter—passes current in the parlour—is sent to the ends of the earth in the book or newspaper—is flippantly spoken all along the walks of life, yet they consider not that God is a God of truth and hath declared that, "All fars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and

brimstone!" They quaff the intoxicating draught, yet consider not that "Drnukards shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

They are those vile characters who work abomination, whom God will judge—yet consider not that they shall be cast ignominiously without the gates of the Celestial City. "Oh that they were wise—that they understood this—that they would *consider* their latter end!"

The fourth on the list of charges is "*Impurity.*"

"Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters:—The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint," &c., &c.

As descriptive of the Jewish nation in the time of the Prophet, this language implied that the entire body politic—the king—the priest—and the people exhibited in the most offensive manner, the most deep-seated, loathsome, and spreading corruption. Considered as a portraiture of modern society, where shall we find any resemblance to it? The "head-sickness" and the "heart-faintness" and the "plague-disfigured person," &c.—to whom may all this apply? May it not be justly referred to those whose intellects are polluted and perverted by the profane ribaldry, the prejudiced and disingenuous arguments of the manikin infidelity of the present day? Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, Diderot, and others of the doubting generation to which they belonged, were a giant race in comparison of the

pigmies of our times, who, incapable of originating a new idea or argument adverse to the christian faith—have resorted to the contemptible weakness and folly of disinterring the “dead negations” of their dishonored ancestry from the graves in which they had been buried by the manly sense and sanctified logic of our orthodox fathers. Taking up these mouldering remains of a bygone heterodoxy, and dressing them up in the gay colors of their gorgeous imaginings, they are essaying to make the world believe them to be living and potent realities. Happily, the silly fraud is too transparent to do the mischief its vain authors so earnestly desire. The mental and moral poison of scepticism is skilfully concealed in much of the popular literature of the age, and is eagerly swallowed by multitudes who are utterly unconscious of its presence in the scientific treatise—the racy history—the fascinating novel—the popular poem and even “The Life of Christ.” The pernicious effects of such teaching are seen in the loss of spiritual faith, and just veneration for religion. In many instances the demoralizing influence of such principles is glaringly apparent in the unbridled licentiousness of the life. No effort is made to conceal their wickedness. No bandage or ointment is used to disguise or correct their vices. They show the mark of the beast of sensuality in their foreheads. “The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide

it not." A healthy public sentiment, like the shore to the ocean, may in respect of others prevent the overflow of the waters of impiety—but these, in the insanity of their virulent disorder, leap defiant over every restraint, seemingly determined to take hell by violence. They glory in their shame. Besides these brawling outlaws there are others who may be called not only "evil-doers," but "*Children* that are corrupters," because their sins are especially mischievous and ruinous to society. Such as are ringleaders in sin—champions in vice—the staggering sot—the eloquent blasphemer—those who ignore the Sabbath for pleasure or profit—and all who are notoriously foul and false belong to this class.

The fifth charge on the list is "*Hypocrisy*."

This evil may be defined as being "the practice of supporting a character different from what is real; dissimulation with regard to the moral or religious character—false profession—pretence—deceit." "To what purpose," asks Jehovah of the Jews, "is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me," &c., &c. Under the veil of a pompous parade of ritualistic worship—those wicked people were guilty of the grossest violations of the laws of humanity, of purity, and right. In the sanctuary they were saintly devils—in society they were devilish saints. A very celebrated painter once produced and exhibited in London a piece representing a friar habited in his canonicals. View the painting at a distance, and you

would think the friar to be in a praying attitude. His hands are clasped together and held horizontally to his breast; his eyes meekly cast down like those of the publican in the gospel; and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration and devout recollection. But take a nearer survey, and the deception vanishes. The book which seemed to be before him is discovered to be a punch-bowl, into which the wretch is all the while, in reality, only squeezing a lemon. How lively a representation of a hypocrite!

When religion, or rather a profession of it is popular, these whited sepulchres are to be seen in every church, rendering the church loathsome to God and odious to men. Such men may speak the language and wear the costume of the household of faith, but their heart is not right with God; the spot upon their souls is not the spot of God's children. They may love to talk of spiritual and heavenly things—and go to church—and hear, and pray, and sing,—and take the holy supper too—but trace them to their secret haunts, and their footsteps will be found in some by-path of sin. My hearers, so great is the danger of self-deception in this matter that it behooves us to sit in rigorous and impartial judgment upon ourselves. “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

The sixth charge on the list is “*Apostacy.*”

“They have forsaken the Lord.” “They are gone

away backwards." "Ye will revolt more and more." So the indictment reads. Their 'anguage of alienation was, "we have loved strangers, and after them will we go." This charge will apply to those of you who once had a name and a place among the children of God, but prodigal-like have taken your portion and left your father and your home. Some of you may have gone away "backward"—not abruptly and at once abandoned the service of Christ—but keeping up the show of devotion while you were declining step by step from the ways of the Lord. As it were politely bowing yourselves out of the divine presence, and keeping your faces set towards Zion, you are purposely travelling backwards to hell! It will apply to you who were once enrolled in the army of Christ, and breathed nought but fealty to your benign and righteous King—and a holy ambition to extend His empire—but you basely deserted the ranks of the "called, and chosen, and faithful" and are now marshalled under the black flag of the Prince of Apostates. Many means has your forbearing and indulgent Saviour employed to win you back to His embrace—or constrain you to retrace your unnatural wanderings, or break with those enemies of His and yours, who have seduced you from your allegiance unto Him. Those means have been used all in vain, and in despair of your repentance He exclaims: "why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt yet more and more!" O take words and return to Him to-night!

We have gone through all the counts in the indictment, and now I ask, "Are you not convinced that the people who are guilty of *any*—not to say *all*—of these charges must indeed be great sinners? I would fain believe that our investigation has, through the convincing power of the Divine Spirit, served to bring the sins of many in this congregation to their remembrance. Perhaps, in the language of Peter, when overwhelmed with confusion and shame and fear, you are ready, as individuals, to exclaim: "Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" If such be your disposition, then listen to the God of Mercy as He speaks to you in the words of our Text: "Come now, and let us reason together!"

What *Gracious Counsel* is this! How amazing the condescension this overture reveals! Just at this juncture, when the guilty, trembling convicts, might reasonably expect insulted Deity to come down, as He did on Sinai, amid roaring tempests, scathing lightnings and appalling thunders of indignation and wrath—proclaiming the dismal doom of His impious foes, and calling upon the executors of His will to do their vengeful duty—just then He manifests Himself in the mild and assuring vestments of the God of love, and utters this *Gracious Counsel*. "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God." This is true not only of those who have never been awakened to a just apprehension of their guilt and peril, but how often is it the case with those

who have been deep-wounded by the Spirit's sword that the pride of their hearts indisposes them to seek, or their guilty terrors cause them to despair of, the mercy of God. Sometimes distorted and unjust conceptions of the Divine character and government fill them with restraining suspicion and distrust. To all in this assembly who are convinced of sin, the God against whom that sin has been committed is this very moment saying: "Come now, and let us reason together!" He would have you draw nigh unto Him. He has opened a way for your acceptable approach. He has given, and appointed His own and only Son to be the mediator between you and Himself. He invites and encourages you to come and tell Him all your tale of guilt, and unworthiness, and shame, and sorrow, and fear. He would have you take Him into your confidence, and unbosom yourselves to Him. O go at once to Jesus, and through faith in Him, cast yourselves at the feet of your offended Father, and then tell Him how wilfully, wantonly and wickedly you have sinned. Tell Him how unworthy you feel yourselves to be of any favor at His hand; and while your hearts are rent with grief, and your eyes weep tears of bitterest repentance, say: "Father forgive, for Jesus died for me." Do this, and you shall blessedly realize that the Lord is "good and ready to forgive." We are warranted in making this statement, for close upon the heels of this gracious counsel of our Text follows the other topic we proposed to



consider, and which renders this address from the lips of Jehovah so marvellously complete, viz.: "*God's Abounding Mercy.*"

To all who come unto God in compliance with His kind invitation, and in the manner we have endeavoured to describe, the mercy of God will abound in the washing away of all guilt from their conscience. He will abundantly pardon, for He declares: "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow." None can forgive sins but God only. This is His exclusive prerogative. Without His pardon—condemnation, "a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation" enchain, torment and terrify the guilty soul. Did the sinner possess worlds—they would be freely offered as the price of a full discharge from the demands of the violated law,—yet worlds innumerable would want wealth to purchase the remission of one of the multitude of his offences. But Christ the Lamb of God was slain to take away the sin of the world, and through the expiatory and procuring merit of that atoning sacrifice "God can be just and the justifier o him which believeth in Jesus." To such an one He saith: "I even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins." It is Abounding Mercy. Thy sins, O sinner, might be in number as the aggregate of the sins ever committed by men and angels,—and in magnitude might

reach unto heaven, yet plunging by faith into the shoreless ocean of God's redeeming love in Christ thou shouldest find occasion to sing with thousands more —

“O Love, thou bottomless abyss !  
My sins are swallowed up in thee ;  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me ;  
While Jesus' blood through earth and skies  
Mercy, free, boundless Mercy, cries !”

Still further will that mercy abound towards them in cleansing their nature from all the defilement of sin. O what an unclean thing is the unsanctified heart of man ! It is the noisome nest of all the brood of slimy, stinging, coiling, twisting, hissing and poisonous vipers of evil. “Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ?” Out of this foul den “proceed all evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies.”

What a pandemonium is such a heart ! It is the lurking place of devils who gather there to practice through human agency their guileful and malicious schemes against the God of purity and truth. And can such vile hearts — such loathsome natures be ever cleansed ? We answer yes ! The abounding mercy proclaimed in the Text insures this triumph of sanctifying power. They can be made “as white as snow.” The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all

sin. He can save to the uttermost. The heathen of old fabled of their Hercules that he cleansed the Augean stables by turning a river through them, and so speedily washing away the accumulated filth of ages. O ye, whose hearts are foul with the sins of a life time, Christ Jesus, the victorious Champion of Gethsemane and Calvary, can cause the river of His cleansing blood to flow right through those hearts sweeping away all their gathered impurities, and discharging their very stains. I take my stand on Calvary to-night, and in the light of faith I see in the flowing wounds of Jesus the fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness; and in the stead of Christ who has made this provision for the world's salvation, I appeal to the guilty and the vile before me, and reiterate His word "come now and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!" You that are sighing for pardon! You that are groaning for redemption from all sin! Come, come to the fountain just now, saying—

"Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me;  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!"

Just as I am, and waiting not,  
To rid my soul of one foul blot;  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!"

But are all the unsaved of this congregation thus disposed to test the truth of our text, and the real efficacy of the Saviour's blood? If so, what joy there is in heaven, and what gladness there will soon be on earth. Yes, gladness on earth,—gladness in your souls—for when the chains of your spiritual captivity are knocked off by the bleeding hands of your strong deliverer, and your diseased and filthy nature is healed and cleansed by His most precious blood, your souls shall be filled with a peace passing all understanding, and a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

Then the prodigal will have returned—the father will have arrested the confession and the prayer with the kiss of loving forgiveness—and the filthy rags will have been stripped off, and the ring, and the best robe and the shoes will have been put on—and the fatted calf will have been killed, and there will be music and dancing, while the Father bending over each returned one will say “This my son was dead and is alive again—he was lost, and is found!” And you will say “O Lord I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me!” “Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul!”

Have I assumed too much when I addressed all the unconverted in this company, as seekers of this great salvation? It is possible I have; and yet I find it difficult to believe that there should be any sinner

present with whom the Holy Spirit has not been striving, in connection with this rich overture of Heaven's mercy, and can scarcely think there should be one, so lost to all that is noble and generous as to resist the appeals of such goodness. There may, however, be some (for sin is a terrible infatuation) who are still "steeling their stubborn hearts, and shaking off their guilty fears" as they have often done before, and have made up their minds not to come to a settlement of the grave difference between them and their God for the present. The thought of such a thing is impious in the extreme—the purpose itself is simply monstrous! I can imagine all Heaven as shocked at such an outrage against the generosity of their King, and even rebellious Hell as hissing shame at the perpetrators of such woeful folly! Were I commissioned to go with this same message of mercy to the dismal world of the lost, and preach it there, what a hearing I should have! The walls of that grim prison would ring with the joyous shouts with which its countless inmates would hail this mighty Jubilee! To them, however, no such Gospel shall ever be proclaimed again. Thousands of them once listened to it as you have done to-night, only to treat it with repeated disdain—and now those sins of crimson dye which a Saviour's blood might then have washed away, are consuming them with a fire that shall never be quenched. With intense anxiety I ask, will you run the risk of sharing


their companionship and their woe by any longer following their example? Now, your justly offended God invites you to His throne of grace, that you may confess and be forgiven. Hesitate a little longer and His imperious summons will arraign you at His tribunal, that you may be judged and convicted and condemned. Then Heaven shall sound it out, and deepest Hell shall echo back your righteous doom. "They obeyed not the Gospel of Christ, let them be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power!"

May the God of mercy save us all now and forever!  
Amen.

## THE REPENTANCE OF A SINNER, THE JOY OF ANGELS.

### SERMON II.

“Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”—LUKE xv. 10.

OWLEY has portrayed Envy in the following vigorous verse, viz,—

“Envy at last crawls forth from hell’s dire throng,  
Of all the direfulest! her black locks hung long,  
Attired with curling serpents; her pale skin  
Was almost dropped from her sharp bones within;  
And at her breast stuck vipers, which did prey  
Upon her panting heart both night and day,  
Sucking black blood from thence, which to repair,  
Both day and night they left fresh poison there.  
Her garments were deep-stained in human gore,  
And torn by her own hands in which she bore  
A knotted whip and bowl, which to the brim  
Did with green gall and juice of wormwood swim,  
With which, when she was drunk, she furious grew,  
And lashed herself: thus from the accursed crew  
Envy, the worst of fiends herself presents  
Envy, good only when she herself torments.”

In reference to this horrid passion St. James asks

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to Envy?" The history of the Bible ages records many of its revolting exhibitions.

Under the cruel mastery of this imperious fiend which as "a burning coal came hissing hot from hell," had found a lodgment in his unnatural breast—the fratricidal Cain led the van of murderers, and walked the earth with trembling the rest of his days, stained with his envied brother's blood.

At the instigation of Envy, the uncertain, sullen and revengeful spirit of Saul, for years plotted the slaughter of the loyal David.

Envy incited the impious Ahab to encompass the death of the unoffending Naboth, that he might become possessed of his vineyard.

On the authority of this inspired volume, we charge this hideous monster, Envy, with the most atrocious crime ever planned in hell or executed on earth—a crime on which the sun in heaven refused to look, and against which the indignant earth remonstrant quaked—the crucifixion of the Son of God; since these Scriptures inform us that "for Envy the Jews delivered Him."

These remarks have been suggested by the circumstances to which we are indebted for these words of our Saviour, chosen for our Text. To use His own words He came into our world "to seek and save that which was lost;" and responsive to the magnetic



power of His unaffected sympathy for them—the wretched and abandoned objects of His special solicitude, in their turn, sought after Him. “The Publicans”—the most depraved, avaricious and dishonestly oppressive of the land; and “The Sinners”—the most degraded men and women in the streets and slums of the City—continued to follow Him that they might hear the gracious words that were wont to fall from His lips. This fact, evidencing the growing popularity of the Prophet of Nazareth, and justly rebuking the haughty Scribes, and self-righteous Pharisees for their uncharitable neglect of these vicious and disreputable portions of Society—filled them with envious rage, and they “murmured” against Him. They probably in a public and contemptuous manner upbraided Him, hoping thereby to lessen His influence in the community. How did our Saviour treat this opposition? Did He directly and severely denounce their conduct? No! There were occasions when He did level and discharge the whole artillery of His indignant contempt and hatred of their sanctimonious pride, and filthy hypocrisy against them, and then His terribly scathing denunciations flashed and pealed with unsurpassed emphasis “Woe unto you Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites!” But on this occasion, He simply uttered the three parables recorded in this chapter in which they could not fail to see the Divine goodness and justice of His conduct, and the unreasonable iniquity of their own. So much

for the history of our Text, let us now consider the Text itself. In doing this we are led naturally to enquire respecting "*The occasion*" and "*The reasons*" of the Angelic Joy which it records.

"*The occasion*" of this Joy, as stated in the text is "One Sinner that repenteth." What is it that constitutes this member of the great human family an object of so much interest to the Angels? It cannot be any thing else than the moral attitude toward God which he occupies. No mention is made of his physical, intellectual or social characteristics and condition. He is simply declared to be the subject of repentance. A sinner he is, it is true; and such characters are not rare in this world. Transgressors of divine law—"Whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." We all know from personal experience, as well as observation, what it is to sin; we do not all understand, perhaps, what it is to repent. Since it is the repentance of this sinner that renders him so interesting to angels, we shall glance at that condition of the human soul which is so designated. Notice, first, *its nature*. Richard Watson thus defines Repentance: "Evangelical Repentance is a godly sorrow wrought in the heart of a sinful person by the word and spirit of God, whereby from a sense of his sin, as offensive to God, and defiling and endangering to his own soul: and from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, he with grief and hatred of all his known sins

turns from them to God, as his Saviour and Lord." This description seems to us both comprehensive and explicit. In every true penitent there will be a *thorough conviction* of sin. Like the prodigal, mentioned in one of the parables in the context, the man has "come to himself"—has been made truly sensible of his state, and deeply feels it. Like him he traces up his sad condition to his starting point, "I left my father's house!" "I have sinned against heaven!" In genuine repentance there will also be experienced a *strong sorrow* for sin: sorrow, not of a selfish sort—but from a regard to the chief heinousness of his offences in that they have been grievously displeasing to God and injurious to others, constraining him to exclaim: "against Thee have I sinned!" Thus the true penitent ingenuously *confesses his sins*, and so assumes the responsibility and guilt of his evil conduct, saying: "I did it! the fault is mine! I am a sinful man!"

Such an one also conceives a *just hatred and abhorrence* of sin. Sins which recently wore for him a fatal charm, and sang for him the fabled Syren's song, now that their true evil nature has been revealed to him, are loathed and repelled. Hence *he forsakes his evil ways*, and seeks unto God for mercy for the guilty past, and help in his endeavours to serve Him for the future. Such are the more prominent features of acceptable repentance.

Next observe, *Its authorship*. In the production of

this great change, Divine and human influences are combined. Repentance, in respect of the gracious ability to feel and exercise it, is most emphatically a *divine gift*. Among the declared purposes of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of the divine Father—is this: "To *give repentance*." It is the office, in part, of the Holy Spirit, (whose more extended ministry in the matter of man's salvation signalized the Saviour's assumption of the post of mediatorship in heaven)—to enlighten, quicken and strengthen the soul "dead in trespasses and sins," and thus reveal the need, supply the motive, and impart the disposition and power to repent.

Again, Repentance, in respect of co-operation with the divine spirit, and improvement of His proffered aid, is the *work of man*. In no case is the free moral agency of man interfered with by the spirit of God, in His endeavour to effect his salvation. By the possession of a rational mind, and a self determining will, man is constituted a responsible being. No physical or moral force operating upon him can necessitate his actions. Given his natural endowments, and spiritual aids as the partaker of the benefits of general redemption, and you find in man the power to choose or reject—to repent, or continue to rebel. In those cases in which divine grace is appreciated and used in order to repentance, the individual can say with David: "I thought on my ways and turned my feet to thy testimonies!" There

will also be the becoming exercises of self-examination, earnest prayer to God, and diligent use of all available means of grace.

We will now give attention to *some examples of Repentance*. The history of Manasseh presents him as closing a career of extraordinary impiety by the experience and expression of a thorough and acceptable repentance. When he occupied his throne and palace—surrounded by sycophantic and flattering courtiers—and having at his command every opportunity and means for the indulgence of his depraved nature, and gratification of his ungodly desires and selfish ambition, his heart increased in hardness, and his conduct grew, day by day, more hateful. But when in the Providence of God he was bound with cords of affliction, and confined within the grim walls of a Babylonish prison, then it was that he repented of his evil ways. “Then he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.”

In David's life we are furnished with another impressive illustration of this experience. Read the fifty-first Psalm and you will find it freighted with all the elements of a genuine repentance, and may thank God that this wonderful outpouring of the impassioned soul of the royal penitent offers to you as it has afforded to thousands of the guilty race the most eloquent utterance for a broken heart and a contrite spirit that could be formed of human language.

Another impressive and instructive instance is that of the Publican who went to the temple to pray. The scene as sketched by the Great Teacher has been faithfully reproduced by 'Holmes' in the following verses, viz.:

"On bended knees replete with godly grief  
See where the mourner kneels to seek relief;  
No "God I thank Thee!" freezes on his tongue  
For works of merit that to him belong;  
Deep in his soul conviction's ploughshare rings  
And to the surface his corruption brings.  
He loathes himself, in lowest dust he lies  
And all abased "Unclean, Unclean" he cries;  
From his full heart pours forth the gushing plea  
'God of the lost, be merciful to me!'  
The light of life descends in heavenly rays,  
And angels shout and sing 'Behold he prays!'"

Mark one more fact in reference to this great moral revolution, viz.: "*Its absolute necessity.*" Nor need we spend much time in discussing this view of the subject. The Bible teaches us that "*God requires it.*" "He commandeth all men every where to repent, because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Consider the memorable and emphatic words of Christ: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" To whom was this spoken? To a representative multitude composed of Pharisees, Sadducees,

men of culture and scholarship, ecclesiastics, and legislators—philosophers and poets—the lordly and rich—the ignoble and poor ; but to these, irrespective of the adventitious distinctions which classified them in the eyes of men, he authoritatively declared, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish !” Therefore, to-day, to the unconverted before us, whether high or low, rich or poor, old or young—we boldly repeat this uncompromising utterance of the Son of God, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish !” Again, consider that Reason corroborates revelation and suggests : “The fitness of things demands that men should repent.” Is it not right and meet—does it not consist with all those ideas of propriety entertained by healthy, well-ordered minds as to the claims of our superiors, to our reverence—of our patrons and friends, to our gratitude, confidence and love—of our rulers and sovereign, to our loyalty and obedience—of our parents, to our most affectionate trust and devotion ? Most assuredly it does, since in repentance there is a return on the part of the sinner to a just recognition of the proper mutual relations between God and himself, such as these, which will at once suggest themselves to your regard, God is the Creator, he is His creature : God is the sovereign,—he is His subject : God is the benefactor, he is the recipient of His favours : God is the Father, he is His child. Take this thought also, religion is designed of God to constitute us happy in both worlds,

and in order to accomplish this end, men must be subjected to the will, and conformed to the image of God. Without repentance this can never be. What would an impenitent, unconverted sinner do in heaven? Although evangelical repentance is not regeneration or justification,—(unless you give the term repentance an unwarranted signification,)—still as it has been made by Him who framed the plan of our redemption—the “*Sine qua non*” of human salvation, how grossly unreasonable it is to expect to be saved unless we repent. From first to last what God requires of us is a reasonable service—whatever, therefore, in our sentiments or practice is contradictory of the teachings, or opposed to the dictates of our reason—when that reason is not warped by prejudice or blinded by passion,—must be wrong. The obverse of this must also hold—and therefore whatever is called for by the fitness of things must be right and necessary. But repentance harmonizes with the fitness of things—it must, of consequence, be necessary that men should repent.

And now, my friends, having discussed at some considerable length the object or occasion of that Joy of Angels of which the Saviour speaks in our Text, viz.: “A repentant Sinner,” I will ask you to enter with me upon the consideration of some of the *reasons which may account for that Joy*.

“There is Joy in the presence of the *Angels of God*.” In the first place, who or what are these “Angels of



God?" Concerning this department of intelligent existence, we are free to confess our knowledge is comparatively limited. All we know about it, however, has been derived from the Bible, and is, therefore, perfectly reliable. The little which has been revealed excites our curiosity to know still more. We must needs be patient in our inquisitiveness, and content ourselves that if we shall be so happy as to reach in experience all the blessed possibilities of our redeemed nature, in respect of this, as of other phases of divine creation and government, the comforting words of the Saviour shall in their largest meaning be realized. "What thou *knowest not now*, thou *shalt know hereafter*." Angels are the highest order of created intelligences. We have no certain information as to the period when they were brought into being. They probably existed long before this material universe was launched upon the vast ocean of space by its divine architect. Over that brilliant event they are reported to have sung together and shouted for joy in a sort of "grand creation jubilee concert." The full chorus on that occasion must have been magnificent! They are of the most ethereal nature, and hence are called "*Spirits*." They are immortal in their being, and as significant of this are titled — "*Living ones*." They are distinguished for wisdom. This is symbolized by the number of their eyes. They are doubtless possessed of a higher intellectual nature than man. The circumstances in which they have been placed

have been most favorable for the acquisition of knowledge. For ages they have been sweeping with the glass of their investigating genius the vast realms of matter and mind. They also excel in strength, and are therefore designated, "*Mighty Angels.*" What stupendous feats of physical power are ascribed to their agency in the history of the Church of God! They are likewise noted for the celerity of their movements. The facility with which they pass from one part of God's empire to another is symbolized by their wings differing in number, and with which they are said to fly. Their social constitution is also interesting. It consists of Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, Principalities and Powers, Thrones and Dominions. A certain portion of them are represented as not having kept their first estate, and as being now under the displeasure of their Creator, being "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," and are called, "The Devil and his Angels." These fallen angels are actuated by a spirit of malicious hostility toward God and man. The rest of the angels are called, "The Angels of God." They are represented as those that "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." These are the angels of whom Christ speaks in our text. In the Saviour's teaching they are exhibited as manifesting a close and constant interest in the affairs of men, and (as in the statement under our present consideration, we are assured,) also experien-

cing great joy in witnessing the developments of divine grace in their salvation. These remarks bring us to the question we propose to answer, viz.: "What reasons may be assigned for the Joy of angels over the repentance of a sinner?" In reply to this question, we may answer, "Angels of God are holy beings and are concerned for the divine glory." Why did they exult and sing when responsive to the fiat of Deity, worlds were born? It was because their unsullied purity of nature allied them in sympathy with the thrice Holy Jehovah, so that when they beheld this unprecedented display of His creative skill and ability, reflecting so much glory upon His natural attributes, they were filled with admiration, and intoxicated with delight. The redemption of man is a grander achievement than the creation of a million universes.

"Redemption! 'Twas creation more sublime:  
Redemption! 'Twas the labour of the skies."

In the contrivance, execution and application of this vast and far-reaching scheme for the rescue from ruin, and the moral reorganization of the human race,

"The full-orbed Deity is seen  
In his full round of rays complete."

The repentance of a sinner is the success of that divine scheme. Divine authority is acknowledged. The excellency of the power of God's grace to subdue and save is hopefully illustrated, and the joy with which they sang the birth of the world's Redeemer on

the meadows of Judea, because they apprehended the glory which was to accrue therefrom to God in the highest degree in this world, and in the highest heaven in the ages to come, again thrills the chords of their finely strung nature, and calls forth their heightened praises as these loyal angels encircle the Divine presence in heaven.

Again, "The angels of God love Christ and are deeply interested in the spread of His redeeming empire," and therefore they rejoice. They always have been, are now, and always will be, intimately identified with the redemptive enterprise of the Prince of Peace. With the first transgressors, while yet though fallen, they were permitted to linger in the garden they had polluted and shadowed by their sin, these angels of God are present. They visit the homes of the Patriarchs and fulfil in their interests missions of mercy and love. To the Prophets—

"Who the breath inspiring felt, and from this world retired,  
Conversed with angels and immortal forms,  
On sacred errands bent."

—these angels of God bore commissions from the throne of God, all designed to bring about that fulness of the times when the Son of God Himself should come forth from the bosom of the Father to save mankind. So all along the pathway of the Saviour—from His advent in Bethlehem, to His enthronement in heaven—we find these angels present with Him, or sub-

ject to His call. Bethlehem, and the Wilderness, Gethsemane and Calvary, the Sepulchre and Bethany, were all witnesses of their continued interest in the great problem He was working out—anxiously studying “The sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow.” Now they are ever busy in their ministries among the heirs of salvation. Every case of repentance and conversion comes within the range of their observation, and they hail in every repentant sinner another trophy of Christ’s redeeming power — another soldier enlisted in His conquering army — another jewel to be polished for His royal crown.

Once more, the Angels of God are *benevolent beings*, and associating the repentance of a sinner with the inestimable blessings of grace and glory to which it is designed to conduct him, they are filled with gladness. These blessings are in the first place — deliverance from the misery and danger of a sinful state. Never can you forget the painful anxiety you realized the other night for the safety of that little child who had been left by her frantic parents in their rapidly burning house. Nor will you, in imagination, ever cease to hear the shouts of joy with which the intelligence of her rescue was hailed by the vast multitude who had been gazing into the blazing ruin until they were nearly blind! So, my brethren, comprehending more fully than we can do the terribleness of the misery and peril from which the grace-rescued penitent is delivered, these angels of God exclaim as they witness

cases of genuine repentance, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning!" and fill all heaven with ringing joy.

In the second place, associated with the repentance of a sinner, the angels of God recognize his introduction into the favor and family of God here, and eternal life hereafter. On this subject, the knowledge of angels must be far in advance of ours, and therefore they rejoice. As on the one hand, their conceptions of the evil and bitter consequences of rebellion against God are more vivid than ours can possibly be, since they witnessed the apostacy and expulsion from heaven, of multitudes of their former compeers in heavenly bliss and glory—so upon the other, they know from personal experience for ages, that in God's favor is life—that in His presence is fulness of joy, and at His right hand are found the pleasures which are for evermore. Actuated by that heaven-implanted benevolence which teaches and enables its subject to look, not upon his own things only, but upon the things of others also—these angels cannot know of even but one sinner repenting, and thus starting fair for life and glory, without realizing such an increase of grateful gladness—as prompts them to tune their harps of gold to loftier strains than were ever reached before.

In conclusion, what may we learn from this subject?

1. It teaches the comparative value of man. It is

a recognized law that truly great beings will never be deeply interested in trivial subjects. But angels who are unquestionably great are interested in man. If so, they must attach some value to him and to his spiritual interests. How differently in this respect do they act from what men are accustomed to do? Commerce, science, government, self-aggrandisement, are every thing to man;—to angels, they are comparatively nothing. What treasure has recently been expended, hardships endured and dangers braved to secure merely the liberty of a few British subjects who were held captive in the heart of the Abyssinian empire! One sinner outweighs in value the wealth of the material universe, since he has been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

2. This subject suggests the duty of all christians.
- They should commiserate those who are in the bondage of sin, and thus imitate the Saviour who sought in order to save the lost. Emulate the beneficent zeal of "the Angels of God" who do not selfishly expend all their thought and attention upon themselves, but take a cordial and practical interest in sinful humanity.

3. This subject affords encouragement to true penitents. Is the sympathy of angels on your side, and shall the God of angels from whom they derived all their love and tenderness, not compassionate you, and rejoice over your return to Him? Think of the Prodigal's father, and hope in God, and be glad.

4. This subject calls the impenitent to self-concern. My fellow-sinner! Do angels take such interest in you, and shall you be indifferent? If they are so concerned about you there must be real occasion for it. May God grant unto every impenitent soul here that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto life not to be repented of!" and may the joy of angels and men mingle in the sanctuary to-night over more than one sinner repenting! Amen.



## THE OUT-POURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND ITS BLESSED EFFECTS.

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### SERMON III.

“ For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring :

And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”—ISAIAH xliv. 3, 4, 5.

THE text may be regarded as one of those prophetic unfoldings of the redeeming goodness of Jehovah, with which the scriptures of the old Testament are so numerous enriched, whose instructive and inspiring light was designed, not only to attract and enliven the hope of the pious Hebrews of Isaiah's day, but, also, in a more especial manner to irradiate that church whose destiny it is to be the spiritual homestead of all nations, and the glory of all future ages. In this language, He, who keepeth mercy for thousands, has enunciated a most magnificent promise

of the copious effusion of the Holy Spirit. The dispensation under which it is our privilege to live, is significantly designated by St. Paul, "the ministration of the spirit." We, therefore, feel warranted to say, that, whatever consolation may have been derived from this promise by the devout who were participants in the former covenant, its most emphatic and extensive fulfilment has been divinely reserved for the age that is now transpiring. No intelligent observer can for one moment doubt that the days in which we live, are indeed those "Last" days to which the spirit of revelation frequently refers, as being that predetermined period in which the Lord of Hosts should spread a feast for all nations, and despatch His messengers in every direction, to promulge the invitations of grace. At no former period in her history, has the christian church been so generally and extensively embarked in the grand work of the world's evangelization. Never before were her victorious columns so rapidly reinforced by the subjects of a living faith. Never before did she possess so abundant a supply of material for carrying on the Holy Crusade—yet, never before was she so deeply sensible of her own weakness and insufficiency for this mighty undertaking. Too long counting upon her resources of intellect, learning, wealth, political influence and power, for a triumphant achievement of her lofty aims, she seems at length to realize her egregious mistake, and in her universal sentiment to

echo the instructive utterance of Jehovah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord!" She now hails in the Holy Ghost the true Zerubbabel, by whose divine skill and energy living stones are to be raised out of the various quarries of rough, unhewn humanity, and builded together as a glorious temple for Deity. Engaged as we now are, in special efforts to promote this glorious work, can we do better than ponder the import of this richly encouraging declaration of the great Master Builder? In doing this, our attention shall be directed to "*The eloquently suggestive promise of the Holy Spirit made to the church, in the words of our text,*" and "*The blessed effects which shall be consequent upon its fulfilment, as therein foretold.*"

In the terms in which this *promise* is couched various facts pertaining to the blessing promised are forcibly suggested and vigorously expressed. Thus we are taught the *necessity* for this gift. Two terms here employed suggest this, viz, "Him that is Thirsty," and "The Dry Ground." This language is descriptive of the spiritual character and condition of this congregation and of the social world around us. Who are we to understand to be meant by "The Thirsty"? In the Holy Scriptures the appetites of the body are frequently used to represent the dispositions of the *soul*. By the "Thirsty," I understand all in this congregation and elsewhere, who are earnestly desiring and diligently seeking those bless-

ings of grace which Christ purchased by His death on Calvary, and in the pressing invitations and precious promises His gospel engages to bestow. The "Thirsty" are they of whom Jesus spoke when He said "Blessed are they which do hunger and *thirst* after righteousness, for they shall be filled." It means men who convinced of their sin, conscious of their guilt and apprehensive of the terrible wrath they have provoked, become intense in their anxiety for pardon, and like the Jailor of Philippi cry out with irrepressible anguish of desire, "What must I do to be saved?" or with the grief stricken Publican of the Gospel story, pray "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

By the "Thirsty" are meant more than these. It is used to describe those who are already members of the Spiritual household, but are eagerly longing after that higher Christian life to which it is the privilege of all God's redeemed children to attain. They know there is a holy and happy state to be reached in this world, in which state the soul is filled with the Spirit, and the entire life actuated and shaped by His divine impulses. When this stage in Christian experience is reached, the soul realizes a gracious ability to obey the christian law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Then the man is "cleansed from all filthiness, both of the flesh and spirit," and is enabled "to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." The ardour with which

this higher good is sought by those who are truly alive to its worth and importance finds expression in the beautiful stanzas of our own Wesley :

“What now is my object and aim?  
 What now is my hope and desire?  
 To follow the Heavenly Lamb,  
 And after his image aspire.  
 My hope is all centred in thee;  
 I trust to recover thy love  
 On earth thy salvation to see  
 And then to enjoy it above.

I thirst for a life-giving God,  
 A God that on Calvary died,  
 A fountain of water and blood  
 Which gushed from Immanuel's side!  
 I gasp for the stream of thy love  
 The spirit of rapture unknown,  
 And then to re-drink it above  
 Eternally fresh from the throne.”

The striking figure by which David expresses the longings of his heart after divine comfort and communion may be used to give utterance to the holy aspirations of those who are thirsting for that “perfect love which casteth out all fear.” “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!” He refers here to the hart which is pursued by the huntsman. Startled from its quiet retreat, away he flies swift of foot. Close behind him the hounds leap. He rushes in frenzy through the tangled thickets seeking for the water-

brooks. His entire nature is intoxicated with fear. The water is seen and reached. He rushes into it to slake his consuming thirst and cool his heaving, heated sides !

Now my hearers, if there are any such among you whose heart and flesh are crying out for the living God. Who are saying "I cannot, Lord, nor will I rest, till I am saved indeed !" then God means you, when He says : "I will pour water upon him that is *"Thirsty."*

Should there be any here who in the dreary darkness, and degrading destitution of their alienated condition as wanderers from God are sighing or sobbing forth the pain-laden cry :

"How shall I find the living way  
Dark and confused, and lost, and blind ?  
Ah, Lord my soul has gone astray !  
Ah, Shepherd seek my soul and find !  
And in thine arms of mercy take  
And bring the weary wanderer back !"

To you, also, are these words of mercy spoken :  
"I will pour water upon him that is *"Thirsty."*

As we have already observed, another descriptive term is found in this connection in our text, viz : "*Dry Ground.*" To whom does this apply ? After a long period of drouth, vegetation languishes, withers, and apparently dies. The old earth itself, seemingly alive to the alarming situation, opens a thousand mouths, whose dry and blistered lips as they turn themselves

upwards seem to implore Heaven for rain. By "Dry Ground" are meant sinful men, who are without any actuating conviction of their sin and danger; men who dead in trespasses and sins are "past feeling"—their conscience "seared as with a hot iron." Are there any such in this church to-night? Is there one here who for years has sat in the house of God and heard the word of God without obeying it, until his moral nature might vie with the adamant for hardness? If there be, then I care not how hard thy heart may be, how utterly insensible thou art to all that is virtuous and pure. Thou art the "Dry Ground" concerning whom the Lord says, "I will pour floods upon the "Dry Ground." Then, my hearers look outside the circumscribed religious communities in our midst, and see the millions of acres of arid moral desert all around us in this world. There are hundreds of houses in this favoured city of ours within which from year to year there is no acknowledgment of God, where His holy name is only invoked to be revoltingly profaned—and whence no words of prayer or praise ever ascend to His ear. Surely these homes of impiety and atheism are the "Dry Ground."

Our text likewise teaches us the *manifest adaptation* of the blessing promised to the existing necessity. The blessing promised is, "*Water*." Water for the "Thirsty." Water for the "Dry Ground." Of all the good creatures of God there is none so suited to slake

the thirst of our physical nature as "water." So, also, there is nothing to compare with water for the revival of the dying vegetation of the sun-scorched fields. Thus, exquisitely adapted to the spiritual necessities of mankind, are the blessings of grace promised in the text. Go to that trembling sinner yonder, who, publican-like, stands looking down to the earth into which he would sink, and in its dark bosom hide his guilty face, while smiting upon his aching breast, he cries: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Go to him and offer him the honors and wealth of earth. He repels this mockery of his grief and want. The man wants mercy, not money; he is sighing for peace, not pearls. So is it with all other blessings embraced in the inventory of Christian good. For the intellect, there is the vast realm of Divine truth to explore,—while the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, will supply the affections with an eternal repast. From the text, we likewise learn that, the blessing promised is also *abundant* and *copious in its measure*. God's gifts are never doled out with a reluctant or parsimonious hand. He gives like a God. "I will," saith He, "*pour* water on him that is *Thirsty*." Every thing we need is at His disposal. For the guilty there is abundant pardon. It hath pleased the Father that in Christ should dwell "all fulness." There is fulness of peace, fulness of purity, fulness of power. When a man avails himself of the grace, which is for him in Christ Jesus, he is equal to all his duties and trials. Every



fibre in his moral nature thrills with vigor. He is all energy and alacrity. He can run in the way of active service and not weary. But he can suffer too. He can walk and not faint. He can bear his burden of sorrow and suffering with patience, for God gives him strength to stand up fair and square under his load of tribulations, and not only to stand, but to walk, and to carry it triumphantly. O the fulness and copiousness of the Divine grace!

But there are to be *floods* upon the *Dry Ground*. Here is abundance too, for it is abundance that is required. If hard hearts are ever to be softened, if haunts of vice are ever to be cleansed, if the slums of the city are to be reached by streams of grace and made clean, it will not be a mere summer's shower that will do the work, but whole days of rain—rivers of water. But our God is equal to the demand made upon Him. He says, I will pour *floods* upon the dry ground, and He can do it. He can make the churlish liberal, the libertine virtuous and pure. He can make the unsavory moral vagrants, who contaminate this fair world, fragrant in the nostrils of Heaven. When this promise is fulfilled, the waters must reach higher than the ancles, or knees, there will be waters to swim in.

The text also teaches that the promised gift of the Holy Spirit shall *be continued to the church*. The promise does not belong to one age only of the christian church, but to all ages. "I will pour my Spirit

on thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Thus, "instead of the fathers shall be the children." Sometimes the people of God are heard lamenting the irreligiousness of the age, and especially deploring the lack of piety among the youth of the land. Patriarchal believer! mother in Israel! in your deep solicitude for the ark of the Lord are you haunted by the fear that, when you are summoned away to your reward, there will none be left to call upon God and uphold and perpetuate His cause in the earth? Take the encouragement offered in the text, and bid the unwarranted and God-dishonoring fear, depart. Never forget the promise is not *to you*, nor *for you only*, but also to the generations that are to be.

Another fact, concerning this promised blessing, stated in the text, claims our notice, viz. :—

The *certainty of its bestowment*. "Fear not," "I will." Such is the assuring style of the divine address upon this subject. There is, alas! much unbelief in the church. This grievous sin paralyses our own powers, and limits the display of the divine ability and willingness to save ourselves and others. Are there not some persons, with whom we are in daily association, whom we have abandoned as utterly hopeless cases? We deem them *too dry* ever to be moistened. Now all such unbelief is deservedly rebuked by the God of salvation, who speaks in our text. He says, "Fear not!" doubt not! work on! pray on! hope on! For "*I will!*" Now, there is a glorious

certainty about these engagements of God with us. Man may say, "I will!" but his best and sincerest designs may be interfered with and thwarted by a thousand uncontrollable circumstances. With God it is not so! "He is not man that He should lie;" "neither is He the son of man that He should repent," or swerve from or alter His purposes. He is all-powerful; who can resist His might? He is all-wise; who can outwit His skill? The hearts of all men, even of kings, are in His hand. He can put to naught the counsel of princes, and control governments and nations. He can make all these, and even the wrath of man to subserve His purposes and so praise Him.

"His every word of grace is strong,  
As that which built the skies;  
The voice that rolls the stars along,  
Speaks all the promises."

Yes, dear friends, when God says, "I will," He means it. He will keep His word. He cannot fail!

Having thus examined the import of "*The promise recorded in the text*," let us next proceed to mark, "*The blessed effects which shall be consequent upon its fulfilment, as therein foretold*."

One of the effects, resulting from the fulfilment of this comprehensive promise, will be—

*An immediate outburst of Spiritual life.*

"They shall spring as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." This development shall be as immediate, and rapid and luxuriant in the moral

world, as the growth of the grass and reeds in Eastern climes after the fertilizing rains which follow a protracted drouth, and that of the verdant and vigorous willows which grace the moistened banks of the winding streams of those sunny lands. What a striking illustration of this in the Pentecostal outburst of gracious life in the days of the apostles! Then thousands were converted and baptized and added to the church, under the effectual preaching of the Gospel, by men and women, who were instinct with large measures of spiritual life received through the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Such has been God's method of working ever since. Revival has followed revival in the history of the church. Such was the Reformation—distinguished not so much for the reconstruction of the church's creed, as for the spiritual regeneration of thousands of her members. The names of Baxter and Bunyan, Whitfield and Wesley, are indices to another era of wonderful outpouring of the life-giving influence of the Holy Spirit.

In our own days a similar outburst occurred in the United States of America, when, it has been estimated not less than four hundred thousand souls were converted to God.

Such, also, is the great revival now going on in Great Britain, under the ministrations of two American laymen, Messrs Moody and Sankey.

Another effect of the fulfilment of the promise will be,—

*A Pronounced and Practical Consecration of the people of God to His service.*

"One shall say, *I am the Lord's.*" This means the confession of Christ before men. Bold and decided testimony for Christ. Coming out from among the ungodly, and standing forth on the Lord's side.

We may have nothing else to give to Him but ourselves; and this is the greatest and best offering that any can make to Him. When the pupils of Socrates had nearly all of them given him a present, there was one of the best scholars who was extremely poor, and he said to Socrates, "I have none of these things which the others have presented to thee; but, O Socrates! I give thee myself." Whereupon Socrates said it was the best present he had received that day." "My son, give me thy heart!" This is what Jesus asks for from you, and from me. If this be withheld, it matters comparatively little what else we may place at His disposal. Some of us can recall with grateful gladness when first we could say:

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done,  
I am my Lord's, and He is mine!"

O that there may be a general giving up of themselves to Christ, on the part of this congregation just now!

"And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." By this, I understand to be meant the *earnest and practical devotion to the christian activi-*

*ties of the church* which shall distinguish its members. The allusion is to the ancient custom of inscribing the name of the master upon the hand of the servant—that of the king upon the hand of the soldier, and that of the Idol upon the hand of the Idolater. To all true christians it may rightly be said, “One is your Master, that is Christ!” In Christ’s vineyard there is a great amount, and a large variety of work to be done. The great demand of to-day is for men and women, willing and prepared to work for Christ. He who subscribes with his hand unto the Lord, is the man who sincerely and anxiously asks the Saviour, “Lord, what would’st thou have me to do?”

Christians are soldiers in Christ’s army. They are marshalled under His cross-marked banner. Christ’s foes are their foes. They are numerous and powerful. Ignorance, error and evil of every kind are opposed to Christ and His kingdom. Christians! Christ is your king. Your king is your captain, and He certainly is worthy of your allegiance and confidence and love. Think, O think of what He has done for you, what He has suffered for you—how He loves you, and you cannot be restrained from rushing into the thickest and fiercest of the battle, not counting even your life dear unto you, in your effort to requite Him for it all. “A little deeper,” said one of the veterans of the first Napoleon’s old guard, when they were probing in his bosom for a bullet that had mortally wounded him, and he thought they were getting somewhere in the

region of the heart. "A little deeper, and you will find the Emperor." My brethren, Jesus enshrined in the best affections of the heart, is the grandest, sweetest, strongest inspiration we can possibly know, in time or in eternity!

Again, we read, "and they shall be called by the name of Jacob, and surnamed by the name of Israel." What does this signify, if it be not the elevating intimation that the christian individual and the christian church, who live to love and serve and honor the Saviour, shall in turn be manifestly recognized, and highly honoured by Him? Gazing upon the people, whom the king is pleased thus to honour, may we not say to them, in the language of the Hebrew prophet, soldier and statesman Moses,—  
"Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

In closing, permit me my brethren of the church to appeal to you and urge you to importunate and believing application for the great blessing revealed in our text.

Unconverted friends let me beseech you to yield to the gracious monitions of the Holy Spirit and be saved! Even now the Divine Saviour who longs to save you is in our midst, and by the powerful work of the Spirit is this moment knocking for admission at

*The Out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, &c. 53*

the door of your hearts ! Grieve Him no longer by persistent rejection of the proffered good ! No longer while away the golden hours of the fast fleeting day of grace, lest ere you are aware, it be forever too late. Probation will not last forever—the age of retribution and destiny hastens !

“ Then, 'tis time to stand entreating  
Christ to let thee in  
At the gate of heaven beating  
Waiting for thy sin !

Nay, alas thou guilty creature  
Hast thou then forgot ?  
Jesus waited long to know thee  
Now He knows thee not ! ”



## THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, ITS NATURE, PROGRESS, AND CONSUMMATION.

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### SERMON IV.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”—1. Cor. xv. 24-28.

“THE world by wisdom knew not God.” Had human reason been competent to discover those great truths which the Bible reveals, there is no ground to believe any such book had ever been written. Assuming the divine authorship of this wonderful book, it ought not to surprise us that among its disclosures should be found mysteries which, while they do not contradict, are far above and beyond the reach of

the unaided human intellect. Some there are, "who irreverently rush where Angels fear to tread;" while others are to be found, who, because they cannot solve every difficulty it presents, play off their wounded pride by madly rejecting the whole system of inspired truth. It will be our wisdom to be equally upon our guard against the impious presumption of the one party, and the soul-destroying contempt of the other. There are difficulties in our text, but like many other of the mysteries of the divine word, they retire before the light of a just mode of interpretation. In the theology of the Unitarian, these words are appealed to with triumph, and many of the children of God, though their faith in the divinity of their Saviour is not staggered by them, cannot pierce the darkness with which they are enveloped.

So far, however, from furnishing those who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, with such justification of their anti-christian sentiments, these words in our interpretation of them, reveal the divine glory of Christ's person and administration, "in its full round of rays, complete." Each successive stage in His eventful career, from the time He forsook the glory which He had with the Father, before the world was, until the period when He shall resume His ancient estate, shall serve to prove with growing force, His peerless claim to divine dignity and worship.

In entering upon the consideration of this passage there are three views of the kingdom of Christ which it presents, to which we invite your attention, viz :

I. *Its Nature.* II. *Its Progress,* and III. *Its Consummation.*

I. *Its Nature.* This is the kingdom and government which Christ sustains at present in heaven and earth as the one mediator between God and man. It is a kingdom which He has received—and which He will in due time deliver up. It is therefore a *limited dominion*, limited in respect of the ages of its duration.

It is not the kingdom of which the Father spake when addressing the Son—He said “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” That kingdom He possessed by virtue of His essential deity—from all eternity and which can never cease to belong to Him.

But it is that kingdom which the Father referred to when He said “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion.” And of which Himself spake, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

It is, that surrender of the hearts, and devotion of the lives of men to His possession and service, which are secured through the efficacy of His atonement, the prevalence of His intercession, the gracious doctrines and pure precepts of His word, and the life giving and life sustaining power of His Spirit. It is that legislative and administrative authority which belongs to Him as head over all things to His church. It is, also that sway which, in a moral aspect, He is gradually attaining over the thrones and other embodiments of political power in the world.

Such, in brief, is the nature of Christ's Kingdom in the earth.

*Note II. Its triumphant progress.* This Kingdom had its birth in that curse-reversing promise made to the sinning pair ere despoiled of virtue, and trembling with guilt they went forth as exiles from their Eden home. As the years multiplied and the ages grew He who was promised as "the seed of the woman," was revealed to the faith of the patriarchal and Jewish saints by symbol, rite, and prophecy. These less imposing and more gradual movements of divine Providence, having prepared the world for the personal advent of the Prince of Peace, were succeeded by that clearer and more perfect exhibition of grace and truth, which was ushered in by His auspicious birth.

His comprehensive and wonderful ministry constitutes the authentic exposition of the nature, principles and purposes of His kingly rule. His tragic sufferings and death on Calvary, furnish the deep and all sufficient foundation for His righteous and universal empire.

His resurrection from the dead, and his enthronement at the right hand of the everlasting Father, afford the assuring guarantee of his final and complete victory over all His foes. This stage in His royal career is far from being reached, as yet. Satan, Sin and Death still hold wide dominion over mankind. As the prince and God of this world—Satan

may count his subjects by hundreds of millions. These are to be found within the extended entrenchments of superstition and infidelity, in the gloomy territory of ignorance, and in the sickly regions of sensuality and vice.

All Satan's subjects are also, as such, the slaves of sin—and all sin is enmity to Christ, and opposition to His kingdom. Think, but for a moment, of the endless variety of sinning which is ceaselessly going on among the diversified classes and conditions of human society—and the mind is overpowered with the terrible proportions of the kingdom of evil. Here are social sins—political sins, sins of trade—ecclesiastical sins. Here are sinners of every size—stripe and shade. The timid and the bold, the coarse and the refined—the snivelling hypocrite and the prayer making blasphemer, the alms-giving villain and the liquor-dealing saint. Over this vast community of evil—Satan and his legions—sin and its slaves,—the kingdom of Christ after nearly two thousand years of aggressive action, has gained, apparently, but little control. To the eye of human reason, the outlook is dark and discouraging. Is it *really* so, however? Has so little been gained? Is the prospect of Christ's triumph so small? We thank God, it is not so. Let the man of sanctified heart and faith-enlightened soul examine the situation, and what will he report? If he avail himself of the intelligence to be derived from the past history and present condition

of the church—he will tell you that the Redeemer's kingdom—whose laws are founded in eternal reason and truth and goodness—whose ministers and agents—are the Holy Ghost—the innumerable company of angels sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, and all who by its redemptive and elevating virtue have been restored to the favor and image of God—whether now in earth, or heaven—that *this* kingdom—like the stone cut out of the mountain in prophetic vision—has been ceaselessly rolling amid the conflicting elements of society, from the beginning to this hour, and with every revolution has been increasing in volume and influence. He will tell you that vast portions of heathen territory have come under the sway of the Royal Saviour, while the multitude of the Isles are either glad for His law, or are eagerly waiting for its promised establishment among them. That Mohammedanism is sick unto death. That the Roman and Greek heresies and superstitions are rapidly losing their hold on the credulity of their dupes. That the current thought of the age in all civilized lands, is more or less saturated with the christian element. That never were they so many enterprises engaged in for the divinely purposed conversion of the heathen, while the extraordinary successes which have attended the labors of evangelists at home, are the wonder of the day. Yes, it is even so. The dispensations of Providence and the developments of grace, the earthquake and storm, the flame and flood, war

and revolution, famine and pestilence, every sermon preached, prayer offered, and act performed for the glory of God and the good of humanity; every conviction of the truth, every sigh for pardon, every tear of penitence and every aspiration after christian love and purity, among any people or in any land, each and all proclaim the progress of Christ's reign, and hasten the fulfilment of the word of God. "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the providential guidance and control of human governments, in connection with the proclamation of the gospel, and the prayers and example of His loyal subjects, Christ shall put down all rule and all authority and power, at present adverse to his interests and the welfare of humanity, and sway an undisputed sceptre over all the earth, and thus realize the vision of John: "The kingdoms of this world, have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

We come now to observe another aspect of this kingdom, presented in the text, viz:

III. *Its consummation.* In this connection, four events claim our attention, and we shall view them in the order in which we consider they shall follow each other in the working out of the far-reaching scheme. In this arrangement we have, *first—The End.*

In discoursing to His Apostles, Christ said: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall

the end come." We have just been contemplating this grand achievement. In the light of divine declaration, and the signs of the times, we have had our faith assured that "Christ shall have dominion, o'er river, sea and shore." To this long-awaited-for accomplishment, shall succeed the close of the eventful earthly drama. At that solemn crisis Christ shall cease His intercession. The Holy Spirit's agency shall be discontinued. Simultaneously with the conclusion of Christ's Priestly meditation, will be the winding up of the remedial administration of Christ, through the institutions of His church on earth. An Angel standing upon the sea and upon the earth, shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, "that there shall be time no longer." Then the period of probation shall end, and the age of retribution begin. Then shall Christ come in the clouds of heaven, attended by myriads of holy Angels, and the spirits of the righteous dead. His coming shall be heralded by the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God. Then they "who remain, and are alive, shall be changed in a moment,—in the twinkling of an eye." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," and the time of his destruction shall then have come. That terrible enemy, who, in the course of ages, shall have held in his rigid clutches countless millions of our race, shall himself, in turn, be conquered. Then shall Christ redeem His long-recorded threat, "O Death,



I will be thy plague; O Grave, I will be thy destruction!" Then shall the voice of the Son of God penetrate the earth, and reverberate among the caves of the ocean. Obedient to its summons, the reorganized bodies of all who on earth or sea have slept the sleep of mortality, shall come forth from their violated sepulchre, to be resumed by those spirits from whom they had been disjoined by death. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Then shall Christ be seated, as the righteous judge, upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. The momentous work of the grand assize shall be begun and ended. The solemn awards of eternal judgment shall be pronounced, and put in force. Then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."

"How rich that God who can such charge defray,  
And bear to fling so bright a world away!"

As by the work of creation, and the continuous display of his perfections in the wonderful department of providential government, the divinity of the Son of God has been, and still is illustriously exhibited, so by the final act of His mediatorial administration, His unqualified Godhead will be most preeminently demonstrated. He now fills the throne of mediatorship, around about which, the Apocalyptic disciple

beheld the emerald-colored rainbow, which symbol impressively teaches that, at present, all the acts of the divine administration, affecting human interests are in harmony with that covenant of grace, which has been ratified by the blood of the Christian sacrifice. When, however, that eventful crisis, which we have been considering, arrives, then that bow shall be removed. The sacrifice and intercession of Christ shall be withdrawn, and then shall follow those results of which we have already spoken. Certainly, He, whose atonement and intercession are so vitally related to the physical and moral universe, so far as the human race are concerned, that while they *continue*, that universe *stands*, and when they *cease*, that universe *falls*, must be none other than supremely and absolutely divine.

The next event in the order of development will be, "*The delivering up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.*"

At present all things pertaining to the providential and redemptive government of mankind are exclusively in the hands of the Son. To Him all legislative and administrative power belongs. He opens and no man shuts; he shuts and no man opens. All that was necessary to the full accomplishment of His mediatorial purposes has been placed at His disposal. The authority to give eternal life unto all who truly believe upon Him is His. The Holy Ghost has been given by the Father to act as the agent of Christ

in effecting His gracious designs in the souls of men. The holy angels have been placed at His command, for when the Father "brought His first-begotten into the world," He said: "Let all the angels of God worship (or serve) Him." The apostles were also given to Him, for of them He spake to the Father, saying: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me." Does He now "sit a priest upon His throne," at the right hand of God, awaiting universal dominion? It is, because the Father hath said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Shall He occupy the throne of judgment, investigate the character and assign the destiny of all mankind? It is, because "the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."

Under the old Roman empire it was the custom for Presidents sent by the emperor to govern provinces, whenever recalled, to restore formally into the hands of their sovereign, the authority with which they had been invested. The apostle seems to have had this usage in his mind, when he wrote this text. In accordance with this chaste allusion, he represents Christ as having redeemed mankind, defeated the policy and overthrown the kingdom of Satan, and flushed with a complete victory over sin and death, wicked angels and rebellious men, returning to the

court of heaven, and resigning his delegated authority into the same hands from which it had been derived. Such resignation of mediatorial prerogative will not only harmonize with the divine claims of the Son of God, but afford an occasion for the most public and convincing demonstration of their perfect righteousness. Upon the vast universe of material worlds, and upon the myriad forms of physical and spiritual beings with which those worlds are tenanted, the eternal power and Godhead of Christ, have been written in characters so luminous that all may see them, and so plain, that all may understand. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him."

This is a proof of the deity of Christ which no one can deny: and down through every age of christian history, and among every kindred and tribe and people and tongue to whom Christ's gospel shall come, it shall travel with ever multiplying power to convince. The soul of humanity true to the instincts of its rational nature, everywhere exclaims: "He that created all things is God." Magnificent and glorious as is the testimony given by creation with her ten thousand tongues to the divinity of Christ, that supplied by perfected redemption shall infinitely exceed it. At that sublime period, when Christ shall re-enter the glory wherein He dwelt before the birth of

worlds, and present unto His Father the precious spoils won from the grasp of sin and death and hell by His victorious might and merits, in the persons of untold millions of blood washed and glory crowned saints, then shall the glory of His divine character shine forth with unprecedented splendour.

Then shall ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, say with a loud voice:—  
“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The next event in the order of development, instanced in the Text, is: *The Subjection of the Son.* “Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him.” This point in our subject is one of the chief battle grounds between the unitarian and orthodox schools of theology. The former, looking at this passage through the lens of their theory, profess to see nothing but overwhelming proof of the personal inferiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Divine Father. The latter, among whom we class ourselves, are enabled by the light of these momentous words of the Apostle, to see the divinity of our Saviour so convincingly demonstrated as to compel our faith, adoration, and love. Let us determine, if possible, the import of the term “Son” here used, as this is evidently the pivot of the argument. We assume that none can reasonably deny the statement, that He who is designated the Lord Jesus

Christ, existed as the Son of God, prior to His incarnation. If this be so then His claims to this title did not arise out of His assumption of human nature, but belonged to Him from all eternity by virtue of His Divine personality. Sustaining such filial relation to the everlasting Father, He was sent by Him into the world, when He took His human nature into fellowship with the Divine nature of the Eternal Son. The only sonship pertaining to His human nature is derived to it from this fellowship alone, that nature never having possessed a personal subsistence in itself. While, therefore, the divine and human natures are united in the Son of God, the personality is of the divine, and not at all of the human. The whole of His personality is therefore designated "the Son of God," or as it is in the text, "The Son." It is of this personality the Apostle speaks, when he says, "the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him." But in what shall this subjection consist? It cannot mean the subjection of the Son in respect of either one of the two natures belonging to Him—since were we to assume that it intended the subordination of the divine nature to the Father, this were the same as to suppose that the Divinity were subject to itself—which is impossible—and should we imagine that it applied only to the human nature, this would be equally unreasonable, because it would imply that the human nature is not now subject to the divine, which is not

the case, because Christ's human nature has always been subject to the divine. Does this subjection apply to Christ's whole person inclusive of both natures, the human and divine? We think not, for such a subjection would imply, (if by *subjection*, as the Unitarian teaches, *inferiority* of nature be meant,) that Christ is not inferior *now*, but will become so *then*. We leave this outgrowth of his own interpretation for the Unitarian to harmonize with his peculiar views.

If then, this subjection does not apply to Christ's nature or person, in what sense does it apply to Him at all? We answer: The Son shall become subject in *office*—not in *nature*; in *relation*—not in *person*. In the mysterious and adorable Godhead, there are, as we believe, three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. We understand the scriptures to teach that the Father is supreme, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are inferior or subordinate to Him, not in nature or personality, but in office or work; the Son being subject in this respect to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, to them both. We are also aware that in scripture language to do, obey, or submit to the will of another, signifies to be *subject* to him. Hence we read: "And He," Jesus, "went down with them," i. e., Joseph and Mary, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." You need not be told that by this is meant, not that Jesus was inferior to the nature and person of His parents, but that He was obedient to their will. On the same

principle we consider the subjection of the Son to the Father taught in our Text, as meaning neither more nor less, than that in the final act of His mediatorial administration, and the completion of the redemptive plan, the Son will accomplish the eternal purpose of the Father. When He came into the world to redeem humanity and engage in the great work of mediatorial government over our race, He said to the Father: "Lo, I come to do thy will O God!" From stage to stage along the entire extent of His career as the Redeemer-king, that original purpose has been steadily observed, and the last demand of that will shall be answered when by abdicating the throne of mediatorship, He shall subject Himself unto, or do the will of the Father, in order that another era in redemption may be ushered in, which shall endure forever, even that in which, "God"—inclusive of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, without distinction of office, "shall be all in all." To this last event in the course of development instanced in the Text, let us now direct our thoughts, viz: *The inauguration of another form of divine government, in which "God shall be all in all."*

It will greatly aid us in reaching a right understanding of this consummating dynasty, in which all foregoing forms of the divine government of our race are destined to culminate, to ascertain if practicable, the true import of the term "God," as here employed. In the 24th verse the Apostle says, the kingdom shall



be delivered up to "God, even the Father." In this verse he simply says, "that God may be all in all." We must here observe an important distinction between the terms, "God even the Father," and "God." When unlimited by association with any particular person of the holy Trinity, the term God invariably signifies the whole Trinity. In illustration of this we may cite the words of Jesus: "There is none good but one, that is God," "God is a Spirit,"—also the language of John: "God is light," "God is love." In these utterances the whole Trinity is included. On the other hand when the term God is connected with either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, it means that particular person of the Godhead so identified. In the light of these facts do we not see that when God the Son, shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God the Father—then God, without any such official or personal distinction as now exists, shall be all in all for evermore; thus establishing in the most public and imposing manner the divinity of the Son. This will more convincingly appear when we note:

1. This Kingdom wherein God is all in all, is elsewhere said to belong to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and is destined to last forever. Hence St. Peter encourages the Christian to persevere in well-doing, by assuring him that at the end of his day of toil an entrance should be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of Our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. This Kingdom must be the final one, for it is everlasting.

2. *In this Kingdom Jesus Christ is to reign forever and ever.* Hear His words: "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne." So St. Paul writes: "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." Of the saints it is also written, "And they shall reign forever and ever."

If, therefore, the saints are to reign forever and ever, and if they are to reign with Christ, then Christ must be destined to reign in His kingdom forever and ever. But if Christ shall reign forever then He must reign after He shall have delivered up the Kingdom. But in that Kingdom in which Christ shall reign forever—"God shall be all in all." But in that Kingdom, in which "God shall be all in all," Christ is destined to reign forever. Christ must, therefore, be a person in the Godhead, and included as such in the declaration of the Apostle—"That God may be all in all."

Thus, enthroned with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the Son, in conjunction with them, shall be the object of everlasting adoration and love. Then without distinction of office or subordination of condition, the Triune Deity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, shall be the beginning and end of that august scene so graphically described by the Apostle of the Apo-

calypse, in which the whole creation, visible and invisible, was united in universal and perpetual worship. "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth; and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: 'Blessing and honour and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!'"

In reviewing the subject which has been engaging our thoughts, there are certain lessons suggested for our consideration.

1. We should rejoice that we are living under the mediatorial reign of Christ.

Let each of us intelligently and cordially submit to His holy rule, that we may enjoy all the saving blessings of His benign administration, even righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

2. The progressive developement assured to the Kingdom of Christ, should render us superior to all temptation to doubt the moral improvement of humanity. Rationalists, secular politicians, and philosophers may declare the impracticable character of this great work, but before the vision of every loyal soldier of the Cross, every valley is exalted and every mountain is made low—and hindrances of every sort are removed, while the way of the Lord is made known in all the earth, and His saving health among all nations.

3. It should stimulate us to co-operate with Christ

in sustaining and extending His righteous dominion in our world. He hath said, "He that is not with me is against me." By believing and importunate prayer—by liberal support of Missionary Institutions—by self consecration to Christ's work wherever opportunity presents itself to labor for the Master; and above all by the potent eloquence and influence of a holy life, may every one of us do something to accelerate the final and universal triumph of our royal Redeemer. May God grant it may be so. Amen.

## PREACHING CHRIST.

### SERMON V.

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom : that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”—COLOSSIANS i. 28.

**A**STRONOMY teaches that all the planets in the solar system, with their attendant satellites, while deriving their light from the sun, concur, in obedience to an uniform law of gravitation, in doing homage to his supremacy, as the stupendous central power which controls, conserves, and harmonizes all their movements.

What the sun is in the material system in which he occupies so conspicuous a position, and exerts an influence so potent, and pervading, *that*, our Lord Jesus Christ is, in the grand economy of saving truth—its central power of attraction,—its light and life—the “Sun of righteousness.” So thought St. Paul, for in his creed, experience, and ministry, Christ was the “Alpha and Omega,” “the Author and Finisher,” the all and in all.” Would he characterize Christian theology? He styles it “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Would he describe his religious experience? He says, "Christ liveth in me." Would he avow the theme of his ministry? He declares it to be "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Through evil as well as good report, when deprived of personal liberty, as well as when with unrestricted freedom he went in and out among the Churches, he ever tenaciously clung to Christ, and gloried in His cross. When he wrote this Epistle he was confined in a Roman prison, where he had been cast by the cruel Emperor Nero, solely on account of his having preached Christ. Amid the damp and dismal darkness, and the sobering solitude of his cheerless cell, does his faith falter? does his love grow cold? Verily, no! Forth from its grim walls sound out the notes of his heroic trust in God, and undying affection for his Saviour. Listen: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:" "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed—for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Under these circumstances it was that tidings reached him of the triumphs of the Gospel at Colosse—intelligence that filled him with great joy. His rejoicing, however, was moderated by the accompanying information that false teachers had crept into that youthful Christian community, and corrupted the minds of

some of its members. This state of things appealing to his jealousy for the honor of Christ, and his love for precious souls, was the occasion of his writing this valuable epistle.

Besides the numerous and judicious counsels, suited to the peculiar condition of the Colossian believers with which it is enriched, this letter contains a masterly vindication of the supreme dignity, and divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He shows how this transcendent verity, that Christ crucified is a Divine Saviour—constitutes the grand centre around which all other truths of the evangelical economy in beautiful harmony revolve, and hence the prominence assigned to this doctrine in the ministry of himself, and his brethren in the Apostleship. It is in this connection we find the words of our text,—“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom : that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

These words as we understand them, teach us what ought to be the Theme, the Mode, and the Motive of the Christian ministry. We propose to examine the topics in the same order in which they are presented.

1. *The Theme of the Christian ministry.*

“Whom we preach” writes the Apostle. Whom did they preach? Let the immediately previous words supply the answer, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” What should ministers preach concerning Christ? If the preaching and testimony of the

Apostles may be their directory, then we may answer as follows :

1. Christ is to be preached as the Son of God.

We cannot but have observed the commanding prominence given by the Apostles in their writings to the doctrine of the proper and essential divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. John testifies of Him, "This is the true God, and eternal life." St. Peter writes, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." St. James designates Him, "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." St. Paul declares Him to be "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"—"the Son of God:"—"the brightness of his glory, and the express image of His person." In the Epistle he affirms of Him, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Contrasting the Gospel with the Law of Moses, and the institutions of the Jewish Church—the Apostles saw in the divinity of the Saviour it reveals, the reason of its unrivalled power, and peerless authority. Their highest impressions of the law of God were derived from the consideration that He who died on Calvary, was the Lord of life, and rich in glory—not only in the form of God, but equal with God. If such



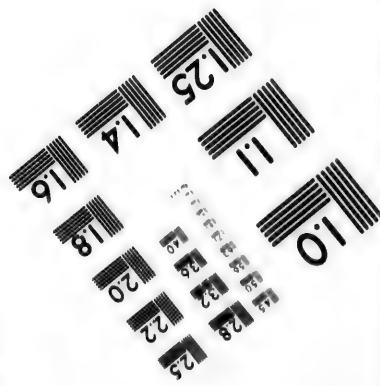
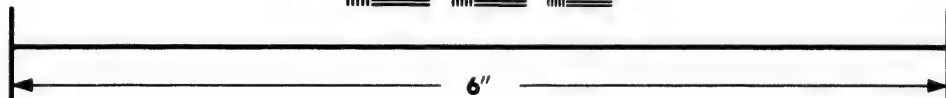
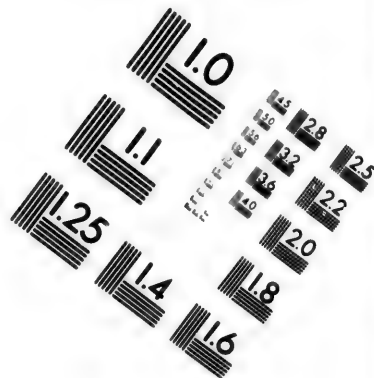
importance were attached by these inspired men to this doctrine, may we not justly assume that, in their ministry, as well as in their epistles they would give it a very conspicuous place? When we reflect upon the relation this doctrine sustains towards the redemptive economy, being to that economy what the keystone is to the arch, the foundation to the superstructure—or the soul to the body, we feel that it cannot be held with too firm a grasp. This conviction is strengthened as we observe the undisguised efforts which are being made by theological adventurers, and self-constituted teachers of religious faiths, in this age of rationalistic heresies, and scientific oppositions, to eliminate from Christianity the Divine element which is its life, and strength and glory. The present is a period when the Christian pulpit should give no uncertain sound upon this cardinal point. With a holy indignation let us hurl back to the regions of falsehood whence it came, the God-dishonoring lie, that Christianity is only one of a series of successively improving development of human wisdom and virtue, to be superseded in its turn, (even if it be not already superseded) by some modern expression of the liberated thought of mankind. Fearless of all successful contradiction from the records of history, the researches of philosophy, and all just interpretation of the divine oracles, may we affirm that by the Christ of the Gospel there have been revealed mysteries so sublime, and virtues so exalted, and deeds in the interest of humanity

so superhuman in their physical grandeur and moral glory achieved, as to compel our admiring faith to exclaim, "My Lord, and my God!" We point them to the vaulted heavens where through illimitable space myriads of worlds revolve—and on the authority of the God of truth, we tell them that among all those magnificent and brilliant orbs, there is not one which was not created, and is not upheld by Jesus Christ.

Before His advent the Seraphim worshipped Him as the thrice holy Jehovah, the Lord of hosts—of whose glory the whole earth was even then full. When on earth He claimed and received divine honors and worship, and now that He is once more enthroned in heaven, the adorations of angels and men are poured forth before Him in extollation of His achievements as the Redeemer God. If a mere creature could create the vast universe, and if it be not idolatry in angels and men to offer divine worship to a created being, then we admit our error in regarding Christ as essentially and practically divine. But if reason and revelation equally denounce such assumptions as alike baseless and blasphemous, as they unquestionably do, then must Christ's own words be true, "I and my Father are one!"

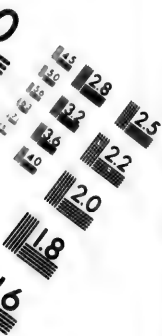
*2. Christ is to be preached as the Son of Man.*

The great majority of the Christian Church believe that as our Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God by an eternal generation, so He is the Son of Man by the mystery of the Incarnation. The great object of His



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mission to our world was our redemption. The accomplishment of this mighty purpose involved His sacrificial death. It was fitting that He should assume the nature of those whom He undertook to redeem, therefore, He took upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." When He came into the world saying, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me," He adds, "but a body hast thou prepared for me," thus referring to the supernatural provision made for His assumption of our nature, or, as another rendering of the language reads, "My ears hast thou opened" or "bored," in allusion to the ancient custom of boring the ears of servants, and harmonizing with the words of the Apostle, "He took upon Him the form of a servant," and with His own declaration, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," or to save, "and to give His life a ransom for many."

Guided by the star of Gospel story we come to Bethlehem and find the infant Jesus, and thence follow Him along the whole career of His humiliation, and as we pass from stage to stage we are more deeply convinced of His real and personal humanity. Gazing upon this side of Christ's nature we are filled with humility and grateful joy. We are humbled, for it was our guilt that rendered necessary He should stoop so low as to take upon Himself a nature capable of suffering and death. We rejoice when we remember that He who stooped so low is one so high, and hence

so mighty to save. For more than thirty years He sojourned upon earth, mingling among men in the true brotherhood of our humanity. His heart overflowing with love, His voice ever eloquent of peace, and His hands stretched forth to bless. The heroic love which induced Him to carry our sorrows, and acquaint Himself with our grief, reached its highest development when upon the altar of the cross He poured out His soul unto death for the transgressors. Then was His human soul riven with the fiery bolts of divine vengeance, and His human body "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Clothed with that humanity which expired on Calvary, and was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, he hath passed into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Too frequently is this assuring fact of our Saviour's perfect humanity, securing for us in Him a personal and kindred friend, lost sight of by His Church. This ought not to be. We are taught to remember that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to succour them that are tempted. What comfort flows from the thought,

"He in the days of feeble flesh,  
Poured out His cries and tears;  
And though exalted feels afresh,  
What every member bears."

As the Son of God, His divinity gives completeness to all His mediatorial sufferings as man, whilst by

virtue of His omniscience and omnipresence, He maintains in this globe the influence and helpfulness of His humanity. As "the man Christ Jesus," He still cherishes for our race the love and sympathy of a human brother amid all their wants, and weaknesses and woes; while as the Son of God, He is able to lift them up above the reach of them all.

3. *Christ is to be preached as the Saviour of the world.*

The world needs a Saviour. Since the fatal hour of Adam's fall in Paradise, sin like a lawless, turbulent tyrant, has held our race in the chains of a cruel, crushing despotism. Like a virulent and loathsome disease, its empoisoning influence taints the blood of every human being. Sin is a terrible evil. Guilt and misery are its fruits in this world, and in the world to come, the bitter pains of eternal death. "O sin," exclaims one, "how hast thou curst us! Thou hast thrown up a barrier between us and God, with thy chilling breath thou hast extinguished the light of our household joys, thou hast unstrung our harp, and filled the air with discordant cries, thou hast unsheathed the sword, and bathed it in human blood, thou hast dug every grave in the bosom of the fair earth; but for thee we should not have known the name of widow or orphan, tear and sigh, sorrow and death; but for thee our hearts had been untorn by a pang, and our joy pure as the ecstasies of heaven!" The cry of humanity in every age has been substantially,

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" What must I do to be saved?"

To these inquiries, interesting beyond all possible expression, the echoes of Christ's voice, lingering in the records of this Book, furnish the only life-inspiring response. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jesus Christ is the Balm of Gilead, the Fountain opened, the True Bethesda. Sound it out East and West, North and South, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Tell the plague-spotted millions, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Let them know that "He tasted death for every man." Proclaim Him the only and all sufficient Saviour! Countless multitudes in all ages have been trying one expedient after another, to roll back the overwhelming tide of evil, to throw off the deadly incubus of sin, to extinguish the hell-fire of a guilty conscience, to force the bolts of the dire prison of the soul, and free themselves from the shackles of Satanic servitude, but have tried in vain. Let them



know that Christ is the God-appointed Saviour, and invested with all power in heaven and earth, is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He, who of old, parted the sea and divided the Jordan, can avert and control the mightiest floods of moral evil, and command the waves of Heaven's anger that they turn not to drown the helpless soul of humanity. From the wounded side of Jesus flows the river of the water of life, which alone can quench the flames of guilt in the soul, cleanse from the impurity of sin, and make our earth once more an Eden for life and beauty. Let but the cry of a penitent sinner, uttered in faith, reach His ear, and there is not a moral dungeon which He cannot force, nor a chain which He cannot break. He can comfort and aid, guide and guard His people all along their path through life, and He will be with and save them in death. Having abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, He hath issued the proclamation, "I am the resurrection and the life." He will convey the disembodied spirits of all who die in Him, to His Father's house, where they shall see His glory and share His heaven. In due time He will wake their guarded dust from the slumber of mortality, and having clothed it with immortal life and beauty, make each glowing body the shrine of a glorified spirit, and so shall they "ever be with the Lord."

4. *Christ must be preached as the Judge of the quick and the dead.*

The various dispensations of the divine government under which men have been placed have all been probationary. That, under which we are privileged to live is the last of such dispensations. To it, is destined to succeed the age of retribution. When the Gospel shall have been preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come. All the ages of human history, prior to that eventful crisis, will have served as the seedtime, and summer of the moral development of our race.

"The harvest is the end of the world." Over all these ages, with the generations of men whose lives they shall have measured, the mediatorial sway of Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" shall have extended. In the end of the world, He shall deliver up this mediatorial Kingdom to God even the Father—and robing Himself with judicial majesty, descend in the clouds of heaven to judge the entire race of mankind. Then shall be heard the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God, quickening the dead, transforming the living, and summoning all before the flaming tribunal. "Then the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Thus signalized shall dawn that day for which all other days were made. Time shall be no longer. The reign of eternity shall begin. Clothed with power and great glory, Christ shall be seated upon the throne of His glory. Before Him shall be gathered all nations.

In one vast assembly all the kindreds, tribes and tongues and people shall mingle. Idolaters and Turks, Jews and Mohammedans, Christians and Infidels shall compose one promiscuous concourse. The wise man, and the fool, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the king and his subject, the slave and his master, the husband and the wife, the parent and the child, the Pastor and the people, the young and the old, the saint and the sinner, mankind and devils, shall all be marshalled there. You will be there, I shall be there, we shall each be recognized by the Judge, and every one answer for himself. The judgment shall be set, and the books opened.

In recognition of His services as the mediatorial king under whose government the world of the Redeemed has been placed, the Lord Jesus Christ is delegated by the everlasting Father to execute the duties of the supremely momentous office of Judge on this august occasion. As God-man He will be peculiarly qualified for this high position. What attributes other than those which pertain to Deity alone would be adequate for the business of this solemn assize? On the other hand how it will assure the confidence, and enhance the joy of the saints to be judged by Him to whom they owe all their preparation for this tremendous crisis: and how infinitely it will aggravate the guilt, and justify the punishment of the wicked, that He who shall condemn them will be none other than He who died to deliver them from the wrath to come.

"Behold" He saith "I come quickly" "Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

In our text we have indicated to us

SECONDLY — *The mode of the Christian Ministry.*

1. "Warning every man."

This language imports danger. The Apostles warned men because they believed them to be in danger. So vividly was this peril seen by those holy men, that it wrought upon their sensibilities and constrained them

"To seek the wandering souls of men  
With cries, entreaties, tears to save—  
To snatch them from the gaping grave."

Addressing the Elders at Ephesus, Saint Paul said :  
"Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears !"

"But knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," he writes to the Corinthians. They believed and taught that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." They thus warned men of the wrath to come and exhorted them to flee for refuge to Christ. Not with unfeeling spirit and revolting harshness of expression—but with unaffected tears did

they declare the alarming truth to every man, irrespective of country, class, or creed. They knew that every man was in danger, and believed that every man who should take warning might deliver his soul.

How men can read the discourses of Christ and the writings of the apostles—and, if they believe in the truth of the Bible—not believe in the existence of a personal devil, and a material hell, I cannot understand. But such is the case—the theological wise-aces of the nineteenth century have ruled that there is neither the one nor the other. Christ and His apostles warned men against the devil, and against the torments of hell. We presume they at least knew as much concerning this subject as Tom Paine, Theodore Parker, Renan or any other of the entire school of freethinkers.

Unless we are better advised than by such impious cavillers, we shall feel bound to warn our fellows to be sober and vigilant, because their "adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Still must we echo the warnings of Christ in the ears of the Pharisees and evil doers of modern times, "Ye serpents! Ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" and affirm with Him that, if they repent not they shall perish—they shall die in their sins, and go away into everlasting punishment. It is at the peril of our own souls that we fail to bear this testimony, seeing that the Divine Master holds us responsible for the

result of our unfaithfulness. To us, He speaks, as well as to Ezekiel, saying "O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me, when I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

The law of *Moses* had its frowning Sinai, capped with thunder clouds shooting forth their bolts of fire, symbolic of the terrible majesty of the Lawgiver, and suggestive of His power to punish the trifier and the rebel; but no threatenings of condemnation and wrath can compare with those written in the redemptive blood of Calvary. "He that despised *Moses'* law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall we be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing—and hath done despite to the spirit of grace?" Not only are sinners exposed to the vengeance of eternal fire—but their danger is heightened by their gross insensibility to the awful fact. Drugged with the narcotics of Infidelity or stupified by the gluttonous indulgence of sensual appetites—they sleep a deadly sleep and need to be aroused by the peals of terror and alarm rung out from the belfry of the Christian Pulpit.

2. "*Teaching every man.*"

The chief function of the ministerial office is to teach men the way of salvation. On this subject mankind are deplorably ignorant. They must needs have "line upon line and precept upon precept." The teaching of the Christian minister is not speculative, but declaratory. His business is not to deal in the conjectural and abstruse, but with the changeless realities, the eternal truths—the immutable and clearly defined principles of divine revelation. His utterances are authoritative only so far as they consist with the only Text Book in the science of salvation—the Holy Bible:

"The author God Himself,  
The subject God and man, salvation, life  
And death—eternal life, eternal death.  
Dread words whose meaning has no end, no bounds  
Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire  
To man this Book contains; defines the bounds  
To vice and virtue, of life and death."

"The truth as it is in Jesus," is the staple of the Christian teacher. That truth embodies the law which determines the nature and defines the limits of truth and falsehood—right and wrong—vice and virtue—good and evil. That truth reveals the only way by which the spiritually dead may be quickened, the guilty pardoned—the vile cleansed. The sufficiency of Christ to satisfy the wants, and fill up the entire mental and moral capacity of every human soul



in which He dwells, constitutes the riches of the glory of this mystery, "which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

With a tone of authority, inspired by the conviction of the absolute truth of His message, and of His divine call to proclaim it, the true minister will fearlessly appeal to every man's conscience. His, is the noble dogmatism which will ever characterize the teacher, who communicates truths in which he thoroughly believes. Nor will such a ministry lack the power to stimulate the intellect, cultivate the fancy,—and answer the demands of man's emotional nature. The Cross of Christ is the luminous centre of the triple universe of morals, mind, and matter—and therefore Creation and Providence—History and Science,—Philosophy and Literature,—Poetry and Art, heaven, earth and hell may be legitimately ransacked for imagery to illustrate and enforce its mighty interests and far reaching claims.

3. "*With all wisdom.*"

The divine plan of salvation revealed in the Gospel contains in itself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The first teachers of this sublime mystery exhibited a great deal of practical wisdom in the fulfilment of their responsible work. Contemplating their mission in its physical and moral magnitude they were constrained to inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Old faiths, and ancient philosophies had to be assailed and overcome. By the pre-



judices of unreasonable men—the cruel desertion of false brethern—and various other forms of opposition did Satan strive to hinder them. Oft-times had they occasion to recall the words of the Master, “Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves!” Fearful lest their mission should fail of success through any indiscretion or mismanagement on their part, they were wont to cast themselves upon the sympathy of the Church, earnestly desiring that prayer might be made in their behalf “that the word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified.” Nor was divine aid sought in vain. God gave unto them “the spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind.” So far as was consistent with loyalty to Christ, and His truth, they were made all things to all men, that they might by all means save some. Did their zeal glow with unabated ardor? It was always according to knowledge. “Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.” Contending earnestly for “the faith once delivered to the saints.” “So fought they, not as those who, (missing their antagonist), beat the air,” every blow which these skilful champions delivered, took effect. Guided by the wisdom which is profitable to direct, they did not rashly rush into danger, neither did they cast their pearls before swine. That modesty which is ever the distinguishing mark and crowning glory of true greatness, either of the intellect, or the heart, forbade vain confidence in their own qualities and attainments,

while their discourses and demeanour were eminently characterized "by the meekness of wisdom." They saw men everywhere, under the woful infatuation of error and evil, rushing on to the dismal shades of eternal death, and feeling themselves entrusted of God with the only means of their salvation, they studied, and sought and prayed for the best way of discharging their solemn obligation. . All their resources of genius, and experience were placed under contribution in this responsible service. They were wide awake—and closely observant of men and things—and while as the means of their own salvation, and that of a world perishing in sin, they were "determined to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"—in order that all men might be brought to this mighty Saviour, they would know everything and employ every circumstance likely to afford them any aid.

Next to the spiritual qualifications of the Christian Minister for the present day, the question of educational training for the sacred office demands the enlightened consideration, and liberal support of the religious public. The age is rife with change. Old landmarks in morals, philosophy and religion are sought to be removed. They, who are expected to stand for the defence of the God-honored Gospel of our fathers, must needs be "able ministers," so fully equipped, as to be competent to meet the enemies of the faith wherever they may be entrenched, whether

it be in the department of historic and classic lore, or in the heights or depths of physical, mental or moral science, and in every place triumphantly plant the glorious banner of Bible truth.

We shall now pass on to observe.

3. *The Motive of the Christian Ministry.*

This is stated in these words, viz., "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." From this we learn two facts.

1. The apostles desired the perfection of their hearers. The religion of Jesus Christ is the only true elevator of sin-degraded humanity. For ages mankind have groaned by reason of the bondage imposed upon them by the despotic power of sin. Ever and anon they have shouted the praises, and urged the claims of some new-found Moses, who was to bring them out of Egypt. Now it has been one creed, then another—now this form of government, then that,—“Civilize!” has shouted one party—“Educate,” has cried another. Meanwhile the world’s condition under their treatment has exhibited no material improvement. And thus it must ever have continued, had not Christianity been divinely instituted. The lofty type of character to which it proposes to elevate its subjects, is “in Christ Jesus.” Under its transforming and soul-expanding power, “men are to come to a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Through faith in Christ they are, by the Divine

Spirit, to be raised into newness of life, and being thereby nourished and strengthened with all might in the inner man—grow up into Him in all things. Sin has occasioned all the physical, intellectual and moral degeneration of our race, but Christ is the Saviour from sin. He teaches how men may escape from the grasp of those vices, and errors and superstitions which are incompatible with a perfect manhood—vices which destroy the body—errors which enfeeble the mind, and superstitions which debase and disappoint the soul. How intolerant is the teaching of the Gospel, of all abuse of our corporeal powers! How high the dignity with which it invests the human body, when it asks, "What? know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" The virtues it enjoins, whenever practised, are designed and suited to promote individual and social health and happiness, wealth and honor. The sublime verities it reveals, and the wide fields for thought and research which it suggestively opens will afford the means of intellectual growth, and moral improvement through the interminable hereafter of our being. Under its auspices the world must advance to the universal enjoyment of the highest civilization. Learning, science, art and commerce shed their manifold blessings upon all nations dwelling within the sphere of its benign influence.

The highest plane of perfection, however, to which it lifts men in this life—is not reached until they

realize that exalted fellowship with God of which St. John writes, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." For this same spiritual completeness, St. Paul prays on behalf of Hebrew Christians, "Now the God of peace, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight." In a word, this Gospel proclaims an indwelling Christ, and an indwelling Christ means the extirpation of all indwelling sin. Nor is this a display of divine ability in which only a few are called to participate. The apostles believed it was open for all, and therefore they warned every man, and taught every man, that they might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Surely the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who is able to save unto the uttermost, one member of the race—is able to save all; and if He be no respecter of persons, (as we are assured, He is not), then He must be as willing as He is able to lift every man up to the enjoyment of this infinite good.

2. The apostles coveted the honor and happiness of presenting their hearers to Christ in the day of judgment, as the trophies of His power to save, and as the fruit of their ministry.

These holy men seemed to live and move—to speak and act, in all their relations to the Church of Christ, as in the light of eternity, and in view of the solemn

scrutiny of eternal judgment. They watched for souls, as those that must give account. Anticipating the period when Christ "shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all that believe," they toiled with unremitting diligence to win souls for Him that should swell the spoils of His victory, and add jewels to His mediatorial crown. Nor were they dead to that holy ambition which is impatient of failure and defeat in the service of Christ. They deprecated the possibility that the disclosures of the last day should prove that in any instance they had run in vain, or labored in vain. Rejoicing with a hallowed delight over those whom they had instrumentally saved, they exhorted them as their "joy and crown" to stand fast in the Lord, saying, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ? For ye are our glory and joy." As spiritual husbandmen they went forth weeping, bearing precious seed—"Sowing beside all waters, looking toward the harvest-time when they should come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them." O my brethren! next to the honour and happiness of being ourselves presented to Christ in that day as monuments of His power to save, will be the glory and joy of presenting others as the fruit of our Christian effort! Contrast-ed with the high distinction attained by those who, "having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever"—the proudest coronets of

earth and the noblest honours of statesmen and heroes shall sink into the shades of an eternal oblivion ! How solemnly startling the thought that we are speaking and hearing and acting every day for eternity, and the moral culture bestowed by others upon us, or bestowed by us upon others, will prove either " the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death ! " The day hastens which shall declare the result of all !

My dear brethren ! in prospect of that approaching review, allow me to ask, Have you tested for yourselves the saving ability of the Christ whom we preach unto you ? Is Christ in you, your hope of glory ? If so, are you seeking to be made perfect in every good work to do His will ? Stop not short of full salvation. Give all diligence in your Master's service, that when He shall come to judge the race, ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and be presented " faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. "

Do I address any who are yet unsaved ? Once more I warn you to flee unto Christ. As the Saviour of sinners, He now invites you to come to Him for pardon, purity, rest and heaven. O do not longer slight His wooing love ! No longer despise His beseeching grace ! By His peerless divinity, and perfect humanity, His spotless life and all-atoning death ; by His resurrection from the dead, and present intercession for you in heaven, and by His coming again to judge mankind, I appeal to you that you

embrace His offered salvation, and thus prepare for an honourable presentation in that day when He shall see in the millions of His redeemed, regenerate, and glorified saints, the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

My dear brethren, there are millions of mankind to whom Christ has never yet been preached! For them as well as for us, He bore the cross! To those of us who have accepted Him as our Saviour, He is saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!"

Though there may be but few of our number to whom it may be given to carry this message to those who, without it, must perish, let us rejoice that it is the privilege of all to go by their representatives, in the person of those self-denying and devoted servants of Christ, the Christian missionaries of the day, and tell them "the old, old story, of Jesus and his love." More intimately and practically identifying ourselves with the cause of Christian Missions, in sympathy, prayer and consecration of time and property—let all our co-operation take its character from the just and inspiring sentiment, "Christ for the world, and the world for Christ." Then shall we accelerate the arrival of that golden age of Christian triumph, when Christ "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth."



## THE INTERESTING INQUIRER.

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### SERMON VI.

“And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”—  
ST. MARK x. 17.

THE historian will properly chronicle, among the prominent events of this century, the remarkable revival of religion in Great Britain and America, under the evangelistic labours of those honoured servants of God, Messrs. Moody and Sankey. The extraordinary success of their efforts was, under God, largely attributable to the sanctified wisdom with which all their movements in their holy campaign were arranged. In their plan of action, the Inquiry Meeting held a prominent place. The object of that meeting was to afford opportunity for those of their hearers who had been aroused to thoughtfulness about their spiritual state, to come within the personal influence of such Christians as were ready to sympathize and pray with them, and give them such advice as might be suited to their case. In

this way hundreds of inquirers were assisted in finding their way to the Saviour. Have we not reason to believe that many a good impression made on the minds of the unconverted by the earnest appeals of the pulpit, has been lost—perhaps never to be reproduced—by not having been followed up by some such special effort to bring souls to the Saviour. When Peter preached the same Gospel to which our congregations listen, seemingly unmoved, from Sabbath to Sabbath, three thousand, at least, were pricked in their heart, and cried out “Men and brethren what shall we do?” Unhappily the rigid proprieties of public worship, enforced by the cold conventionalism of the present day, are seldom interfered with by any such natural outburst of irrepressible anxiety respecting the salvation of their souls, on the part of thousands who statedly frequent our sanctuaries. Does this circumstance, however, justify us in assuming that no solicitude is felt by the unconverted in our congregations to become wise unto salvation? We think not. On the contrary, remembering that “the word of the Lord is still quick and powerful,”—that the divine Spirit is still in our assemblies to “convince of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and that Christ’s messengers are always either the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death to those unto whom they proclaim the Gospel—we feel assured that we are often speaking to those who, were they faithful to themselves, would eagerly enquire of us,

in the words of the Jailer at Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" or in the language of the individual in the narrative before us, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" With the hope of encouraging and wisely directing any such inquirers as may be here, we ask your attention, while we examine for a short time this instructive story. First, we note

*The interesting Inquirer.*

He stands before us in the pride of his early manhood—since Matthew speaks of him as "the young man." Flushed with the warm blood and vital energy of their youthful prime, young men generally are strangers to all gloomy forebodings of the future, and thoughtlessly abandon themselves to the control of whatever yields them present enjoyment. In the greater number of instances those books, companions and pursuits as give the greatest degree of satisfaction to the tastes, passions and appetites of their unreserved nature, are most eagerly sought after and most dearly prized. Some beautiful exceptions there are—young men who hear their Father in heaven saying to them, "My son, give me thy heart." "Seek ye my face," and who reply, "Thy face Lord will I seek!" We look with admiration, gratitude, and hope upon such instances of youthful piety. Besides the personal benefits realized by those who embrace religion while young, what a golden future opens before them with its demands and opportunities for

the useful development of all the ambitions, enterprise, energy, and passion of their unimpaired youthful being. The ranks of those who are toiling in the moral harvest fields of earth, or fighting the battles of truth and freedom, must be reinforced. If the harvest-home is ever to be sung, or the crowning victory of the right and the good is ever to be achieved, there must be a larger number than we have been accustomed to see, consecrating themselves to Christ and His cause, while the dew of youth yet sparkles upon their brow. The subject of this narrative, though *young*, was *gravely concerned* about *spiritual realities*, and hence asked the way to obtain "*eternal life*." He was not only young — he was also *rich*; he had "*great possessions*;" "*he was VERY RICH*." He was a Jew—one of a people proverbially remarkable for their success in the accumulation of property. His wealth, in all probability, had been inherited — since being yet young, he can scarcely be supposed to have amassed it by his own exertions. He may have been the first born—the only son of some Judean nobleman, and upon the death of his honoured sire, had come into possession of the large family estate. "If this were the case," say some—*you perhaps*—"was he not happy enough without bothering his head and heart about religion? Why need he trouble himself about his soul and eternity?" No, he is not satisfied. Something within him there is, as there is within you and me and every man, that

the wealth of the material universe cannot satisfy. The soul—the immaterial, the immortal soul—this cries out for eternal life, for the living God. How different is it with this young man, possessed of all his lordly wealth, and surrounded with all the personal and social conveniences which riches can command, and too many of those who, in these modern times, happen to be the heirs of opulent parents. Unlike them he was not found lavishing his wealth in effeminating self-indulgence, nor wasting it in sensual and riotous living, on the one hand; nor upon the other, does he cling to it with such miserly devotion as to be forgetful of the higher good for which his spiritual nature craves. No spirit of haughty independence inflates his mind, alienating his sympathies from his fellow-men, or disposing him to look down upon them with supercilious scorn. Intended to be a blessing to their possessor, to how many, alas, have riches, through their abuse, been the greatest curse that could have befallen them.

But this Inquirer was not only *young and rich*—he was also *high in rank*—*He was a ruler*. In all probability he was a member of the Sanhedrim, the chief council of his nation. He was one of six senators chosen out of his tribe, and one of seventy-two chosen from all the tribes, to whom the political, judicial and religious affairs of the nation were committed. The qualifications for this high position were of a special character. To be eligible for this office, the

candidate must be of untainted birth, of the priestly, Levitical or Judicial race, learned in the written and traditional law, and in other respects, highly educated. Looked at from this stand-point it was no small honour which belonged to this young man. His flattering honours, no more than his teeming affluence, did not give him spirit-rest. He is yet *unquiet*. His soul longs for something beyond,—*eternal life*. While meditating upon this fact, we were reminded of the following beautiful incident in the earlier life of our beloved Queen: “William IV. expired about midnight at Windsor palace. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with other peers and high functionaries of the kingdom, was in attendance. As soon as ‘the sceptre had departed’ with the last breath of the King, the Archbishop quitted Windsor castle, and made his way with all possible speed to Kingston palace, the residence at that time of the Princess—already by the law of succession, Queen Victoria. He arrived long before daylight, announced himself, and requested an immediate interview with the Princess. She hastily attired herself, and met the venerable prelate in her ante-room. He informed her of the death of William, and formally announced to her that she was, in law and right, successor to the deceased monarch.

“The sovereignty of the most powerful nation was at the feet of a girl of eighteen! She was, *de jure*, Queen of the realm on which ‘the sun never sets.’ She was deeply agitated at the formidable words, so

fraught with blessing or calamity, and the first words she was able to utter were these: 'I ask your prayers in my behalf.'

"They kneeled together, and Victoria inaugurated her reign, like the young king of Israel in the olden time, by asking from the Highest, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, 'an understanding heart to judge so great a people, who could not be numbered nor counted for multitude.'

"The sequel of her reign has been worthy of such a beginning. Every throne in Europe has tottered since that day; most of them have been for a time overturned. That of England was never so firmly seated in the loyalty and love of the people as at this hour. Queen Victoria, God bless her! enjoys personal influence too, the heart-felt homage paid her as a *Christian* woman, incomparably wider and greater than that of any monarch now reigning."

Again, we observe the inquirer of our text was also *Exemplarily moral.*

When instructed by the Saviour respecting the commandments of the divine law, he unhesitatingly answered, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth:" like Timothy, "from a child he had known the holy scriptures," and so far as an external obedience of the precepts of the law went, his conduct had been perfect. The good Spirit of God had evidently been working with this noble youth, and under His moulding influence, his character had assumed a

manifest charm of moral beauty, which compelled the admiration and sympathy of Christ, for it is recorded—  
“Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him.”

How few there are, who, from their infancy, having been favoured with the superior advantages of the Christian religion, can say with this young Jew, as touching the commandments of the Lord, “All these have I observed from my youth.” “Certainly,” you are ready to say, “with so unspotted a character, and so irreproachable a life, he must have been a happy man !” No, his experience taught him, and by his example Christ would teach us, that mere conformity to the letter of God’s law, can bring no rest to the conscience that is still burdened with the guilt of sin. All his morality failed to satisfy him; conscious of something wanting, he asks, “What lack I yet ?” But this Inquirer was also distinguished by *humility* and *earnestness* in his search for the chief good. “There came one *running*, and *kneeled* to Him.” He had heard of the wonderful Teacher of Galilee. The intelligence has favourably impressed him. It does not become him, as an ingenuous inquirer, to overlook any source from which light may shine upon his doubts and illumine his path. He will seek an interview. He will propound to him the question which has so long been agitating his soul. More noble and manly than that other ruler, Nicodemus, who came to Christ by night, and worshipped a *dead* Saviour, he came to him in the light of day and with the eyes of his co-



religionists all gazing in astonishment upon him. He is ignorant, and he is not ashamed to confess it. He is in *earnest* too. The opportunity is a passing one, if missed may never repeat itself; therefore, reckless of appearances, of his riches and high rank, he *runs* to meet the Saviour. The real state of a man's heart more frequently manifests itself in *little*, than in *great* things. This simple act of *running*, reveals most convincingly the intense longing of this young man's spirit for religious *instruction*. What earnestness is manifested by men in connection with the ordinary interests of life. The merchant, mechanic, farmer, politician, the men of law, physic and science, how absorbed do they become with their various pursuits. In their judgment, the object they have in view is worthy of their zeal, and their fellow-men applaud them. Amid this universal earnestness, are the interests of the soul the only subject which may be treated with slackness and indifference? Judging from the treatment they receive from the majority of mankind, you would be led to think so. Is this conduct right? Is it wise? Let divine wisdom answer: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find

the knowledge of God." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," saith Christ, "for many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able." Oh, if there be any interest belonging to us as responsible beings that demands and justifies zeal and earnestness, it is the welfare of our never-dying soul!

Let us now turn away our attention from the inquirer himself, and take into consideration, for a few moments,

*His important Question—*

"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

This youth was manifestly orthodox on the questions of the soul's immortality, a future state of existence, and the different retributions awaiting mankind in the life which is to come. The Sadducean philosophy had not entangled him in its net. He seemed to realize that his eligibility for the blissful inheritance of the good was dependent upon the perfection of character to which he might attain on earth. His life-long observance of the letter of the moral law had been regarded by him as going far towards qualifying him for future fellowship with the just. He had formed an exaggerated estimate of his virtue. He had yet to learn the spirituality of the divine law, and that its perfectness is displayed in the conversion of the soul.

Though groping and stumbling in the dark, he was wisely agitated by the most momentous of all subjects—his *preparation for eternal life*. What a vast

amount of thought, philosophy, science, skill and labour is constantly laid under contribution for the promotion and protection of physical life! How infinitely more commanding in its claims is the question involving the well-being of the soul! — “What must I do to be saved?” Who has ever realized the full import of this question? “It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” It is the question of life and death — eternal life and eternal death. Ere long you and I will be either forever saved, or forever lost. Have you entertained this subject? Are you saved? If not, I beseech you take it up at once, and never rest until you are divinely satisfied as to your safety. Observe, in the next place,

*The faithful answer.*

In addressing the Saviour, this young ruler styled him “Good Master!” It was the custom of the Jewish Rabbis to exact from their disciples “*high titles*,” and it would appear from the reproof administered in Christ’s reply, “Why callest thou me Good? there is none good but one, that is God;” that He understood the young man as recognizing in Him no more than a distinguished prophet, and out of mere compliment applying to him a title which none but God could rightly claim. Failing to observe this important point (willingly or unwillingly is best known to themselves) Arians and Socinians, only too glad to find even a shadow of reason for the dishonour

they do the Son of God by their peculiar views of His person, affirm that He here disclaimed all title to divine honours. Like all prejudiced theorists, they strangely overlook the fact that if the Saviour be not the divine Messiah — then, by conditioning the final salvation of this man upon his obedience to such terms as he saw fit to dictate — he unwarrantably assumed the divine prerogative, and thus laid himself open to the irresistible charge of the grossest blasphemy.

Having thus rebuked the young man for this instance of sinful servility, the Saviour proceeds to test his religious character by the suggestive remark, "Thou knowest the commandments," instancing several of them. According to Matthew's account of this occurrence, besides those precepts of the decalogue which Mark mentions, the Saviour added the general command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The great Teacher, you will perceive, confined himself to the duties enjoined in the second table, saying nothing concerning those of the first. Well did he know that the man who should obey the spirit and letter of the second table, must have previously understood and complied with the requirements of the first. Such obedience to the commandments which Christ enjoined upon this inquirer, is the best proof a man can give to others, or find for himself, that he is actuated by the sincere love of God and not by mere sentiment or emotion. Nor let any

mistake the meaning of the Saviour's words to this young man as reported by Matthew: "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." It must be borne in mind, the question of the young man referred to final salvation, not to his immediate justification before God. The Saviour's instructions harmonize with the Gospel system as a whole, which, while it teaches that a man is justified by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law, also proclaims, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

The great object of Christ's obedience unto death was that He might become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* Him.

Such obedience as He requires is both the outgrowth and proof of supreme love to Him. In the case of this inquirer, the Saviour perceived that with all the earnestness and amiability manifested by him, he was a stranger to this self-sacrificing affection. He saw that self and wealth and social position were the real rival of eternal life within his soul, and yet he knew it not. His religion, hitherto, had made no severe and painful exactions in these respects. Henceforth these must be subjected to the divine will. Thus far his real worship has been given to these enthroned idols. If he would be right; if he would be saved, his love, and trust, and devotion must be withdrawn from these and given wholly to Christ. Hence the

command, "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me."

And this, dear friends, is still the universal condition of discipleship to Christ. *Sell all rival interests and objects for Christ. Confess Christ. Suffer for Christ. Serve Christ.* The language of surrender is—

"The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee.

"Henceforth may no profane delight  
Divide this consecrated soul;  
Possess it Thou, who hast the right,  
As Lord and Master of the whole."

The rival, with different persons, may be pleasure, or wealth, or honour, or intellect, or rank, or reputation, but whatever it is, that thing must be given up to Christ. And what shall I have in return? do you ask. You shall have Christ; and is not He enough? And with Christ "you shall have treasure in heaven." Or as Christ, on another occasion, declared concerning those who should leave all for Him, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

One thing more in connection with this interesting inquirer remains to be noted, viz :—

*The sorrowful departure.*

"And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved; for he had great possessions."

He has asked the way to life, the price at which it might be his. His inquiry has been made of the wisest, the kindest, the most faithful of teachers. The answer has been given. It has taken him by surprise, has disappointed him. It harmonizes with the work of the Spirit within him. His conscience responds to its truthful force. Will he comply with these terms, against which he can urge no reasonable complaint? He is sad that it is so, but the sacrifice demanded he is not prepared to make, and, turning away from Christ, he *departs* — *departs grieved*. Well may he grieve. The probability is that act of choice decided his fate forever. If so, he is grieving still, not that he was asked to give up his riches for Christ, but that he was once asked to do so, and he foolishly refused.

Alas! how many have acted a similar part. One has preferred one thing, and another some other thing, to Christ, though powerfully convinced of the reality and need of religion, yet unwilling to make the sacrifice which it demanded of them. May there not be some here who are this very moment hesitating as to how they shall act? You feel your need of Christ. You are anxious to be Christians, but some of you have ungodly companions whose friendship and society you feel you cannot forego. With others there is that business in which you are engaged which can-

not be reconciled with Christian principles, and yet it promises you early independence in a pecuniary point of view. Others, perhaps, imagine should they become decided Christians, it would seriously interfere with their social respectability and influence. Or, some parents there may be who are desirous so to educate and train their children that they may shine in the circles of polite and gay society, and well know that true religion would not tolerate such a perversion of parental affection as such an education involves. My dear friends, whatever may be the obstacle in your way, determine by the grace of God to overcome it. Let nothing induce you to disobey the dictates of the Spirit of God. Though the sacrifice be costly and painful as parting with the eye or the hand, remember eternal life will compensate infinitely for all. Think, O think, what Christ sacrificed to obtain this eternal life for you. He came to earth that you might go to heaven. He bore the cross with its shame and suffering, that you might wear the crown, with its untold joys and surpassing glory.

“Too much to Him you cannot give;  
Too much you cannot do for Him.”

Turn your back upon Christ and eternal life and you may have your gay companions, your sinful delights, your flattering honours, your hoarded wealth, and “all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,” but you will be sad and wretched amid them all, wretched in time, and wretched forever.

Accept His terms—give Him your heart—take Him



as your chief good, and there shall be at once opened in your soul a well-spring of joy and gladness that, overflowing in your daily life, shall enhance all that is truly bright and beautiful on earth, and make even the most desolate places in life's pilgrimage "bud and blossom as the rose."

Stay not to parley with passion and unbelief. Listen not to the whisperings of thy reluctant and deceitful heart: There is time enough yet; the future will bring other opportunities, and perchance, easier terms. Beware! This young man, I fear, never came so near to Christ and heaven again. Add not to the number of those unhappy cases so well described by Mrs. Sigourney in the following lines, viz :—

"Alone he sat, and wept. That very night  
The ambassador of God with earnest zeal  
Of eloquence, had warned him to repent;  
And, like the Roman at Drusilla's side,  
Hearing the truth, he trembled. Conscience wrought,  
Yet sin allured. The struggle shook him sore.  
The dim lamp waned,—the hour of midnight toll'd;  
Prayer sought for entrance, but the heart had closed  
Its diamond valve. He threw him on his couch,  
And bade the Spirit of his God depart.  
But there was war within him, and he sighed,  
'Depart not utterly, thou Blessed One!  
Return when youth is past, and make my soul  
For ever thine.'

With kindling brow he trod  
The haunts of pleasure, while the viol's voice,  
And beauty's smile, his joyous pulses woke.

To love he knelt, while on his brow she hung  
Her freshest myrtle wreath. For gold he sought,  
And wingéd wealth indulged him, till the world  
Pronounced him happy. Manhood's vigorous prime  
Swell'd to its climax, and his busy days  
And restless nights, swept like a tide away.  
Care struck deep around him, and each shoot  
Still striking earthward, like the Indian tree,  
Shut out with woven shades the eye of heaven.  
When lo ! a message from the Crucified,  
'Look unto me and live.' Pausing, he spake  
Of weariness and haste, and want of time,  
And duty to his children, and besought  
A longer space to do the work of Heaven.  
—God spake again, when age had shed its snows  
On his warm temples, and the palsied hand  
Shrank from gold-gathering. But the rigid chain  
Of habit bound him, and he still implored  
A more convenient season.

'See, my step  
Is firm and free ; my unquenched eye delights  
To view this pleasant world ; and life with me  
May last for many years. In the calm hour  
Of lingering sickness, I can better fit  
For vast eternity.'


Disease approached  
And reason fled. The maniac strove with death,  
And grappled like a fiend, with shrieks and cries,  
Till darkness smote his eyeballs, and thick ice  
Closed in upon his heart-strings. The poor clay  
Lay vanquished and distorted. But the soul,—  
The *soul* whose promised season never came,  
To hearken to its Maker's call had gone  
To weigh His *sufferance*, with its own *abuse*,  
And bide the audit."

## AN EARNEST SEEKER.

### SERMON VII.

"Oh that I knew where I might find him ! that I might come even to his seat !

"I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."—JOB xxiii. 3, 4.

UR text is one of those portions of holy writ which we are accustomed to take at face, seemingly instinct as they are with the Spirit which gave them birth. The phraseology is eloquent of the sentiments the speaker was desirous to express ; still it is evident that it falls far short of fully unburdening his impassioned soul. Nor can we be at a loss to determine upon the character to whom such sentiments as these may be appropriately referred. We would not, for instance, think of referring them to the redeemed in glory ! No, their circumstances are such as forever to preclude the necessity for such language as this. With peculiarly grateful delight are we wont to contemplate the goodly multitude who have fulfilled their period of earthly conflict and service, and have gone up to heaven ; among whom

are many of those whose memory we love to cherish. The happiness of that shining throng is derived largely from the beatific vision of God, for they behold His face—they “see Him as he is,” “and He that sitteth upon the throne, dwelleth among them;” and so shall they “ever be with the Lord.”

Neither can we refer this language to the lost in hell! Brethren, there is a hell, the contortions of the would-be-thought benevolent Universalist, to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor is this hell a mere figment—a daringly impious, or wanton fancy of a fertile brain. Neither has it been stolen by the hand of unprincipled and tyrannous priestcraft, from the mythology of the ancient heathen. No, before the faith of every unprejudiced student of the inspired volume, there looms up in all the sublimity of its fiery horrors, a world prepared by sin-avenging Omnipotence as the penal abode of the devil and his angels. The authority underlying this doctrine is the same in nature and amount as that which supports our unquestioning faith in the existence of a heaven of purity and bliss. Though originally designed for recreant angels, whom God hath “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day,” this hell is declared by Jehovah to be the place where the incorrigibly wicked of the human race shall suffer “the vengeance of eternal fire.” Millions of mankind have already been consigned to this flaming prison, having through continued impenitence

rendered themselves "vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction." Not to one of these "whose worm dieth not," is the language of our text referred. Do you ask, why? Then I answer, "God is there," for saith the Psalmist, "whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there!" Yes, He is there; there in the inviolable integrity and high majesty of His truth; there in the stern inexorableness of His law; there in the burning heat of His quenchless wrath, and the invincibility of His eternal power. The clear consciousness of this fact rivets every chain, and locks the door upon the inmate of each cell, or, like a ponderous mill-stone tied about their neck drags the infuriated victims of despair down deeper and yet deeper still in the depths of illimitable woe. To think, therefore, of referring our text to these, would be exceedingly absurd, since, could the miserable wretches expel the Deity from their world of torment, they would thereby remove the essential element of their hell.

Nor may this language be attributed to the defiantly wicked on earth. The sentiment of their life and conduct is — "The farther from God the better." Therefore they say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways!"

To whom then may such an utterance as this be considered properly to belong? The children of God, such as Job, when in affliction, may thus long to find

their way through the bewilderment of their mental confusion and heart-breaking sorrow, to the presence of their God—there to plead their suit with Him ; or it may be regarded as the earnest and impassioned outpouring of the heart of a true penitent, anxious to know the joy of God's salvation. Such is the application we shall make of it on this occasion. The language is comprehensive and suggestive. We have in it—

*Conscious need.*

Among the many hindrances which the Gospel minister meets with in his efforts to save the souls of his fellow-men, the most common and formidable is a spirit of self-sufficient independence. What, though the devil has despoiled them of all true virtue and happiness, this haughty and scornful independence flings itself athwart the threshold of such men's hearts, and casting a disdainful look upon the proffered blessings of the Gospel, proudly replies, "I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing." Of such men the holy Saviour Himself hath said, "They know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." There is many a man who will conventionally unite with the multitude in a general avowal of moral destitution, and with the very perfection of elocutionary taste and expression declare for himself and others, "*And there is no health in us!*" who, if you should presume to apply to him the humiliating fact which

he has just affirmed with so much affected humility, would very soon, in the heat of his wounded pride, let you know that his private opinion of his character and condition is far more complimentary to himself. "I'm not so bad after all!" is one of those popular cheats which the arch-fiend practices upon his numerous dupes. What a deadly infatuation it is! The Pharisees of the Saviour's day were under its blinding spell; hence, when He was charging home upon them, as well as others, a common depravity and a common guilt, they asked Him in a tone of indignant self-complacency, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said unto them, (mark His words!) "If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but, because ye say, 'We see;' therefore your sin remaineth."

But, brethren, the language of the text is the language of a soul that is

*Distressingly conscious of a great loss.*

The man feels that he is without God! He is strongly sensible of an aching void within his soul which naught but God can fill! Prompted by this irrepressible cry of his soul for God, he exclaims, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

We have also in the text—

*Acknowledgment of ignorance.*

"Oh that I knew!" No truth is more explicitly taught in the Bible than that men by nature know not God, nor can obtain a saving knowledge of Him, only as they are educated by the Holy

Ghost. Like Nicodemus, they may be masters in Israel, and yet know not the things of the Spirit; or like Philip, they may have fellowship with Christ in the persons of His disciples, yet know Him not. Hear what St. Paul saith: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Wise in their own conceits, nothing is more common than for unconverted men to manifest the most indignant feeling that they whose intellectual powers are so vigorous, and whose stores of knowledge are so vast, should be thought incompetent to interpret the meaning of the Divine word. They are "vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind," and in the pride of their mental status seem to say, "We are the men, and wisdom will die with us!" painfully illustrating the sentiment of the immortal Young—

"With the talents of an angel, a man may be a fool!"

Now, brethren, the text is the language of a man who is spiritually ignorant, and is not ashamed to own that he is so. He is emptied of all his once



boasted wisdom, and in the simplicity and docility of unsophisticated childhood, he exclaims, "Oh that I knew!"

Again, we have in the text most longingly expressed, *Earnest Inquiry.*

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!" This is the language of a man who seems determined, if possible, to ascertain the way he must take to find the object of his search. The strong solicitude of his spirit labours for utterance in the desire-laden words which fall from his lips—

*"Oh that I knew!"*

And my brethren, none ever reached heaven without inquiring the way. None ever realized the salvation of the soul without making it the paramount object of his desire. If a man is truly in earnest to secure the favour of God, he will not be ashamed to let others know it. The unbidden tear will glisten in the eye; the anxious, grief-laden sigh will involuntarily escape the lip, thus eloquently proclaiming the painful longings of his inquiring soul.

As the Church is described by Solomon in his elegant Song as saying, "I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth;" and meeting with the watchmen inquires of them, saying, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" so the sincere penitent will inquiringly frequent those places where the stately steppings of God are wont to be heard (for His way is in

the sanctuary), and with becoming ardour will he ask counsel of the watchmen standing upon the walls of Zion, and from the people of God, saying, "Who will show me any good?" "What must I do to be saved?"

We have also in the language of the text—

*An implied willingness to go anywhere to find God.*

"Oh that I knew *where*." "There I would at once go," he seems to say. Such a disposition is ever begotten of a thorough-going repentance. When a man manifests a squeamish fastidiousness about doing this or that in order to obtain the peace of God; when he refuses to take counsel in spiritual things of a man, though he be an earnest Christian, simply because he cannot enunciate the shibboleth of this or that religious sect, you may depend upon it the ploughshare of conviction for sin has not been gauged sufficiently deep. The surface of the fallow field may have been broken, but the subsoil has not been reached. Superficial work may answer well enough in some matters, but never in those which relate to the soul. There have been those who have smothered a true repentance, as it were, in its cradle, by suppressing its strong emotions rather than its infant cries should prove offensive to ears polite. There have been those, we firmly believe, who have gone down to hell bound hand and foot with the curse of God, having sought salvation in their creed, or in their church, rather than in Christ. If a man be as roughly handled by the law of God as

either Job or David, or Saul of Tarsus, or as hosts of others have been, I'll go bound he'll not decline "the cup of salvation" because it may be proffered by a Churchman or a Dissenter, by a Calvinist or an Arminian. What doth Job say? "He hath broken me asunder. He hath also taken me by the neck and shaken me to pieces!" Here the figure is borrowed from the action of officers of the law when arresting men for some cause or other. In some instances they deem it necessary to seize them firmly, and, by their violent handling, make their prisoner sensible of their power and the uselessness of resistance. So, my brethren, when the Holy Ghost takes the word of God, the legal warrant, in one hand, and with the other apprehends the sinner, and, lifting him up by the *neck* — the man's *strength* and *pride* — holds or shakes him over the flaming chasm of perdition, the vain starch of bigotry, the sneer of pride and the snarl of perverse unbelief, will be pretty well taken out of him. I think he'll be ready enough to cry out for quarter, saying, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay Thee all." Or like David, when, as he describes it, the Lord had lifted him up and cast him down to the ground, and all his bones were broken, he will cry loud enough, "O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul!" Or like Saul of Tarsus, when the almighty Redeemer, as a vigorous combatant, felled him to the earth by the blow of His glorious power, and with the sword which proceeded out

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of His mouth, discerned the thoughts and intents of his heart, saying "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" you may be assured that heavy fall knocked all the Pharisaic cant and Jewish bigotry out of Saul, and compelled him to exclaim, "Lord what wouldst thou have me to do?" I presume, if Ananias had not been sent to him, he would have been perfectly willing to go to Ananias, or any other man living, to obtain comfort to his troubled conscience. Thus, the true penitent is willing to go any where or every where to find a pardoning God.

We have likewise in the text—

*Determination to plead with God.*

"I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." There can be no reasonable hope of any man's salvation, however moral may be his life, or however good may be his professed desires, who has not begun to pray about it. Some circumstances connected with the salvation of men may greatly differ, but in this they must all agree: they must all pray. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It must be true prayer—the pouring out from the soul before God of supplications, with strong crying and tears. Job says, "I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Here he speaks as a man who has been condemned by the laws of his country, but feels that if he could only be admitted into the presence of his judge or sovereign, he would

so press his suit for mercy as to set aside the sentence against him. "I would order my cause;" that is, "I would confess the whole matter to him." So every truly contrite sinner will frankly acknowledge his transgressions and unworthiness unto the Lord. Thus did David. Thus did the Publican. And he adds, "I would fill my mouth with arguments." Have you ever thought, my hearers, of the number, variety and force of the arguments of which a penitent sinner may avail himself in pleading with God for mercy? Every attribute of Deity; every sinner now in glory; every child of God on earth, may be entered as a consideration in the suppliant's brief. There is one argument used by David in his appeal for mercy which, at first hearing, sounds strange indeed: "Pardon my iniquity," saith he, "for it is great." Ponder that argument. Do you not perceive its force? Is it not as though he had said, "Pardon me, for I'm a great sinner, and unless I find great mercy, must inherit great damnation: I'm a great sinner, and therefore need a great Saviour."

Again: Every act of Providence which may have influenced his outward life, and every inspiration of the Spirit of grace realized within his soul, will give greater breadth and solidity to his ground of appeal. Above and beyond every other, that all-powerful argument which Divine love forged upon the anvil of the cross, when Calvary's summit blazed with the flames of sin-avenging justice; when "God spared not his

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own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all ;" that grand argument remains, and of itself alone is irresistible. He will, with Him, "freely give us all things!" It is recorded of Jacob that, in his argument with the angel, "he wept and made supplication ; therefore had he power over the angel and prevailed." It would seem as though the voice of his tears was louder than the voice of his supplication. So David saith, "Hold not thy peace at my tears!" And likewise Job, in the fervour of his importunity, employed the same eloquent argument, for, saith he, "Mine eye poureth out tears unto God!" In the history of our blessed Saviour's earthly sojourn, an interesting and thrillingly impressive scene is recorded, from which we may gather what it is to "order our cause," or plead with God. The Saviour was visiting the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and a poor woman—in all probability a widow—came unto Him, and crying, told Him her tale of sorrow, and implored His sympathy and aid, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!" You are aware of the manner in which the Saviour saw fit to test her earnestness and her faith. How nobly that pleading mother parried every difficulty ! How sublimely she developed her indomitable faith, constructing out of the very circumstances that would have effectually daunted the great majority of applicants, a sure way of approach to the Saviour's heart, until by a single

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stroke of sanctified ingenuity her faith carried that mighty heart as it were by storm, compelling the beneficent Redeemer to exclaim, "O woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

One thing more remains in the text, viz:—

*Hopeful Faith.*

It seems to be the language of one who confidently believes that *God may be found*, and that prayer made to Him must prevail. Hath not Jehovah declared, "Then will I be found of you, when ye seek me with your whole heart?" And again: "Let the heart of them rejoice who seek the Lord!" It is sometimes very difficult to obtain the audience of earthly royalty. Interest may be made at court: wealth may be freely expended: repeated efforts made, only to be followed by a heavier disappointment. But, brethren, hear what the Sovereign of the vast universe hath proclaimed: "Draw nigh unto me and I will draw nigh unto you!" "The Lord is nigh unto them of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Never has He disappointed one. He hath never said unto the seed of Jacob "Seek ye my face," in vain! God's altar still hath horns, viz: "What God hath said," and "What God hath done." Upon these faith must seize with a vigorous grasp. Hath He not said, "Ask and ye shall receive: seek and ye shall find?" The mountains may be removed, the earth may perish, and the heavens pass away, but this covenant of eternal truth shall

remain as stable as the pillars of the Almighty's throne.

And what hath He done? Did He not bring David "up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay? and did he not deliver Job out of all his troubles?" Yes, He has had mercy upon thousands, and already millions who have been pardoned through His clemency and sanctified by His grace, have been exalted to His heaven, and are there enthroned in glory everlasting. With such ever-multiplying evidences of God's willingness and ability to save, the true penitent may shake hands with his fears forever, and confidently say, "I will trust in thee and not be afraid," for thou, O God, "art become my salvation!"

In conclusion. Are there those here who are saying "Oh that I knew where I might find Him?" Let me answer you: Jesus is here. He is not far from any one of us. He is here to bless. You are on pleading terms and praying ground! You might have been in hell! Men and women who once stood as good a chance for heaven as any of us, are there to-night, blaspheming God because of their pains, and dolefully lamenting "The harvest is past and the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" Glory be to God, you are not there. You may take Jesus for your Saviour to-night. Lay hold upon Him just now, and though it be with but a trembling hand, thou shalt be saved.

Have I been addressing any who, through the pride



of their countenance, will not seek after God? There was a period when you knew what it was to feel after God if haply you might find Him. Then your heart was tender and your conscience sensitive. Your will was not then as stubborn as it now is. You have survived all that sort of thing! Have you indeed? Then I am free to confess, I tremble before God for you! Do you not know there is an annealing process through which the devil sometimes puts the human heart, the tendency of which is to prepare men for endless torment? When the artisan would attemper an article, he puts it through a series of heatings and coolings until it has been rendered as hard as he desires. So the devil attempers his work. He soon perceives when an individual is warmed and softened down by the fire of Divine influence, and immediately he assails him with powerful temptation to sin, and soon succeeds in bathing him effectually in the iced-water of folly and vain pleasure. Does the man again show symptoms of feeling and just concern for his soul? Is he almost persuaded to be a Christian? Soon will the devil transfer him, if the man does not vigorously resist, into the freezing north of scepticism and infidelity, and a man will require but a very brief experience of this sort to qualify him to stave off all the remonstrances and tearful entreaties of his best friends—all the expostulations of long-suffering Deity.

Like a moral armadillo, he is impervious to all argument! He is "past feeling." He is *attempered!*

Thoughtless, unfeeling sinner, beware! "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while he is near." "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever!"

Oh that, to-night, angels may carry the tidings home, that the anguish-cry of many a heart in this assembly is that of the text, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

May God add his blessing. AMEN.

## A GOOD HOPE.

### SERMON VIII.

“Good Hope through grace.”—2 THESS. ii. 16.

THE human soul dissatisfied with its present attainments spontaneously stretches forth in bright anticipations, and revels in unbounded liberty amid the promised or the fancied enjoyments of the unlimited future. It is this peculiar modification of pleasing and vivid desire which has been denominated Hope. Call it passion, principle, affection, or what you will, it is a divine implantation in the soul of man. It is a mighty force in every department of human activity. It is the solace of our sorrows, and the parent of many of our joys. Every situation in life lies within the range of its genial and inspiring influence. Each denizen of earth shares in the impartial distribution of its favours. Yonder pallid youth who burns the midnight oil over life-consuming studies is stimulated by the hope of winning those honours which are awarded to men of eminence in literature and science. Men who, in the world of commerce, are manfully bearing up beneath the pres-

sure of solicitude and care, and contending bravely against a thousand baffling disappointments, are both animated and strengthened by the hope of future independence. The honest husbandman cultivates his fields because, to the eye of his patient hope, they wave with the golden harvest. The wan invalid, to whom wearisome days and nights of affliction are appointed, finds a balm for many a pain in the enlivening hope of restored health. The accused culprit, as he tremblingly stands at the bar of his country, hopes for acquittal. The chained convict, amid the dreary darkness and sickening solitude of his dismal dungeon, hopes for pardon. The exiled victim of an iron despotism gathers fortitude from the hope that after long years of suffering and servitude he shall be restored to liberty and to home. This element of our nature is employed by the God of grace in the work of our salvation. The revelations of Holy Writ are chiefly addressed to our hope. Indeed, so inseparably and importantly is hope divinely associated with all that affects us both for the life which now is and for that also which is to come, that we may properly affirm, with St. Paul, "We are saved by Hope!" Hope, in its relation to spiritual and eternal realities, or the Hope of the Christian, designated in our text a "Good Hope through grace," is our selected theme for this occasion. In discussing the Christian's Hope we shall chiefly notice its declared goodness or excellence. It is a "*Good*" Hope. For evidence of this, examine

*Its Foundation.*

A sound philosophy teaches us to begin our investigations here, since should there be any flaw, any defect, any weakness here, it must of necessity impart that imperfection to the superstructure that may depend upon it for support. That superstructure may be grand and gorgeous, solid and symmetrical, but it will be unworthy of our confidence because of the uncertain basis upon which it is built. Upon what then is the Hope of the Christian based? We answer, upon the Promise of God, attested by His Oath, and ratified by the Blood of Christ. The children of God of every age have been divinely regarded as "heirs of promise," because they have ever been authorised to hope for that "eternal life which God that cannot lie *promised* before the world began." This promise was made to godly patriarchs before the giving of the Mosaic law and organizing of the Jewish church, frequently styled by the sacred writers "*the beginning or foundation of the world.*" The resplendent heaven of Divine Revelation is thickly studded with Stars of Promise, which derive the glorious beauty which belongs to them, and their untold interest for us, from the radiant and hallowed immortality to which they so serenely point.

This Promise, or covenant of eternal life, has been attested by the divine oath. "For God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath ;

that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." In infinite condescension to the incredulity of self-condemned penitents, a gracious God has stooped to confirm the simple utterance of His truthful mercy to mankind by the solemnity of an oath, saying, "As I live!" How well suited is this divine asseveration to divert our attention from the instability of all material and created beings and things in earth or heaven, and rivet it upon the uncreated, the self-existent, the unchangeable, the eternal God? Here He swears not by any finite object or being, but by Himself, the creator and upholder of all things. These may, many of them shall, sooner or later, perish; but He shall endure from everlasting to everlasting: "His years shall never fail."

This Promise of eternal life, substantiated by Oath, has been solemnly ratified by the Blood of Christ. Hence, the blood of the great Christian sacrifice is called the "blood of the everlasting covenant." In this designation allusion is undoubtedly made to the ancient mode of ratifying and rendering binding the obligations of contracts or covenants. This was frequently done by the contracting parties eating and drinking together; but chiefly by feasting on a sacrifice, having first divided the victim into parts and passed between them, signifying by this act their purpose to fulfil all the terms of the engagement on pain

of being divided or cut asunder as the sacrifice had been, should they violate the covenant. This view intelligently interprets the language of our adorable Redeemer when, instituting the commemorative feast of His church, He said, as He handed the cup to the disciples, "This cup is the new testament (or covenant) in my blood, which is shed for you." In other words, He thus declared, "This wine is the symbol of my blood which is shortly to be poured out in ratification of the new covenant." Christian believer! would you have your faith in the ground-work of your spiritual hope confirmed? then go and take your stand on the blood-crimsoned summit of Calvary and gaze by faith upon the crucified Jesus. Listen to His unanswered appeal amid the hell-like gloom of that hour when the stern Law, armed with the gleaming sword of Justice, was making inquisition for blood, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Hark! Once more He cries with a loud voice, as though He would command the audience of heaven, earth, and hell, "It is finished!" and then closing His eyes, all is hushed in death. Gaze, my fellow-Christian, upon that scene! Allow its impressive associations to have a place in your thoughts, and tell me "If God spared not His own Son, but thus delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" O where within the vast range of the divine empire shall we find an argument to support our Hope which can make the least

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perceptible approach to that which is written out in the precious blood of a dying Saviour? Here is solid rock—an immutable basis—a good foundation!

To see the goodness of the Christian's Hope, notice *Its Origin.*

This Hope is not the creation of an earth-born philosophy. Neither is it the low-born confidence of Pharisaic goodness. There are those who conceive that they have only to mould their lives in accordance with the dictates of their unaided reason in order to secure for themselves present happiness and a blissful destiny. Others there are who, though professing to receive the bible as a divine revelation of human duty and privilege, are vainly endeavouring to substitute their own graceless performances for the grace of God, which alone can bring salvation to our depraved nature. As regards the first mentioned class, we boldly affirm, none ever did,—none ever can live up to the inferior teachings of nature without the renewing grace of God; and in respect of the others, who “are going about to establish their own righteousness,” the Saviour has furnished us with a short method of silencing their proudly paraded claims to heaven by saying “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye can in no wise see the kingdom of heaven.” Whence then does a legitimate hope of heaven spring? We answer: it is the portion of such only as have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, not by the deeds of the law, nor



by the sacraments of the church, but by the life-giving and sanctifying energy of the Holy Ghost. Such persons only are the acknowledged children of God, and consequently, heirs,—“heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” These, and only these, can truthfully and lawfully “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” In this thorough and mighty transformation of character and life it is emphatically true that “all things are of God;” hence, in its *origin*, this Hope is preëminently *good*.

Again: the excellence of the Christian’s Hope may be seen if we examine

*Its Objects.*

These are *Grace* and *Glory*. First: the Christian may hope for the enjoyment of certain blessings of Grace. And here we must not fail to distinguish between those blessings of grace which are matters of present realization and those which have not yet become ours by personal experience, and are therefore legitimately objects of hope. A want of distinct understanding on this point has induced in the religious world a vast deal of vagueness and uncertainty in respect of the great experimental verities of the christian faith. How common it is to hear such utterances as these from the lips of those who ought to be well instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God in the human soul, viz: “I hope I am converted,” “I hope my sins are forgiven,” “I hope I love Jesus,” and such like. Such a doubtful mode of

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acknowledging the bestowments of grace, whether it arise from a fear of deceiving either themselves or others, or from any other motive, is alike derogatory to the Saviour and inconsistent with the revealed privileges of the children of God. If they are the children of God then they know it, for their new birth is no longer a contingency, but stands out before all their mental and moral perceptions as the greatest event of all their lives. Because "they are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying Abba, Father;" the Holy Ghost, the author of their regeneration, thus attesting His own work by His indwelling presence in their hearts. Now, on such premises as these we may argue, with the Apostle, "That which is seen,"—that which is now felt and enjoyed,—*"is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"*

If then pardon and regeneration are blessings already experienced by them, what other blessings remain for which the children of God may reasonably hope? Fulfilling the prescribed terms of the christian covenant, they may confidently expect those enlarged communications of divine grace by which they shall be enabled to *"cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."* Called into *"the household of faith,"* that they may not only enjoy the heavenly gift themselves, but as instruments of good communicate it to others also, they may hope for

such strength to be imparted as shall qualify them "to serve the Lord, and to serve their generation by the will of God." Moreover, as their present condition in the world is designed of God to be disciplinary in its character and results; involving the opposition of men and the hostility of devils, the dangers of prosperity and the trials of adversity, the afflictions of the mind, and the sufferings of the body; so may all faithful christians hope that "as their day so their strength shall be," and also to be kept throughout the whole course of their probationary existence "by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." They may therefore hopefully sing with the ancient church, "this God is our God forever and ever; He shall be our guide even unto death!"

Secondly: the Hope of the Christian contemplates the treasures of Glory, as well as the blessings of Grace. By the treasures of Glory, are meant all those vast and munificent donations of the divine goodness, which shall succeed upon the death of the heirs of promise, comprising a glorious immortality in the realms of celestial bliss. And here we may appropriate the eloquent doxology of the apostle Peter, and say, "blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." To old tes-

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tament saints, patriarchs and prophets, priests and kings, holy men and pious women—"as the stars of the sky in multitude,"—was revealed the glorious future of the Lord's redeemed. "They looked for a city which hath foundations," "they desired a better country," they anticipated a time when their dead bodies should awake and arise, and in freshness and beauty be as the pearly dew-drops which glisten amid the herbage of nature in the revealing light of early morn. They expected a period when the recompense of reward should be conferred on the righteous, and through the parted heavens, rent by their divine faith, they peered into the excellent glory, and caught a glimpse of the fulness of joy, which is in the presence of God, and the pleasures which are at His right hand forevermore. It was then but the dawn of revelation, and hence their conceptions of the partially discovered glory of the saints' heaven were comparatively vague and indistinct, resembling the views we catch of the scenery of nature by gazing upon it through the mists and vapours of early morning; or to return to the figurative representation of the subject, to which we have already referred, as furnished by St. Peter, we may observe that the painting, which, during the lapse of four thousand years, was produced by the hand of the Divine artist, and upon which the church of the first-born gazed through those preparatory centuries—exhibited but the bare outline of heavenly realities. But blessed be

God, who, by the unfoldings of the Gospel, confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, has retouched the old picture and given an exquisite finish to all its parts, so that now we no longer behold merely the high lands of heaven looming up in the misty distance, but distinctly see the measured metropolis of the saints—its open gates, its angelic guards, its wall great and high, its streets of gold, and the whole radiant with the glory of God. We see the paradise of God, the incorruptible inheritance, watered by the river of the water of life, which, pure as crystal, rolls its sparkling tide through the midst of this garden of delights—while on either side flourishes the tree of life, covered with luxuriant foliage, and laden with golden fruit.

And what is more, we see the enthroned Saviour crowned with glory and honour—surrounded by the innumerable company of angels, and a great multitude of our redeemed race invested with the highest dignity, and possessed of supreme happiness.

These glowing intimations of the glory reserved for the saints, shall all be realized. Our exalted and glorified nature through ceaselessly revolving ages shall be eternally improving amid the inexhaustible resources of that sublime region of existence. “So shall we be ever with the Lord.”

Once more we observe, the Hope of the Christian is good or excellent if we consider

*Its Influence.*

The Hope of the Christian is *purifying*. Unlike

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the sordid and earthly hopes of the ungodly, this hope elevates the soul to God in its thoughts, affections and aspirations, and the effect cannot be other than highly sanctifying. There are those who make silver their hope, and gold their confidence; who trust in horses and chariots, and in the multitude of their riches boast themselves. Alas! how sensualizing and debasing is the influence of these low and uncertain confidences! Oh if there indeed be a pitiable specimen of fallen humanity in this world, it is that miserable being who, as he feasts his eyes upon his glittering heaps of (it may be, ill-gotten) wealth, saith in his heart, "Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry!" Surely, if possible, angels must weep as they witness the atheism and beast-like sensuality of such a being, so unlike God, so grovelling, so vile! Grasping after wealth, panting for honour, or in the hot pursuit of pleasure, how greedily do the children of this world drink in sin; and how adroit do they become in the legerdemain and chicanery of hell! How widely different is it with the children of God! Whosoever hath within him the good Hope of the Christian, "purifieth himself even as God is pure." The gospel of his salvation "teacheth him that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, he should live godly, righteously and soberly in the world." Heavenly incentives and sanctifying duties, are the inseparable and improving companions of the saints in their travel to the skies.

The Hope of the Christian is *comforting*. The world in which we live has been thickly sown by sin with the seeds of sorrow and suffering. The child of God is not exempted from a participation in the ordinary ills of this troublesome state of existence. While, under circumstances of sorrow and trial, the worldling is overwhelmed with wretchedness and shrouded with the darkness of despair, the subject of Christian Hope in the severest exigencies of life is enabled "in patience to possess his soul." In the dark night of adversity—when the angry billows of life's boisterous ocean are spending their fury on the sides of his frail vessel, and not a solitary star of human help and kindness peeps encouragement from the cloud-veiled sky which overhangs him—the radiant angel of smiling Hope comes to his rescue, and whispers the words of comfort in his ear: "Weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." The voyage may be long and tedious; for days, a wearying calm may rule the deep, and the sails may not even flap as they uselessly hang upon the mast. Then again a fierce tempest sweeps the sea, and leaves but a sailless, mastless wreck behind it: but even now, Hope unappalled by disaster of every sort, inspires the undaunted mariner to say, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "He hath

delivered me, and I trust in Him that He will still deliver."

"The fiercer the blast, the sooner 'tis past :  
The troubles that come,  
All come to our rescue, and hasten us home !"

The Hope of the Christian is *Invigorating*. The hope of reward not only sweetens labour, but also nerves the soul with power to act. The path of Christian duty may be arduous, the burden of responsibility may be heavy, but the inspiring words of the Master greet the ear: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life!" "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me!" Oh what so invigorating to the soul — strengthening to do or suffer for God — as the hope of reigning and being glorified together with Christ? Prospecting this ultimate portion of the redeemed from earth, St. Paul thus philosophised, as he laid the present suffering and future glory of the Christian respectively in the balances: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." In the contemplation of that glory, this indomitable Apostle found inspiration qualifying him for the most arduous undertakings, the most painful trials, and the most perilous enterprises. Is Pagan Rome the object of his Christian sympathy? Hear his noble utterance: "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also!" Nothing can exceed in point of moral



sublimity the undaunted and triumphant bearing of this Prince among the sons of God as he stood face to face with the king of terrors. Red-handed persecution points with its cruel sword to the blood-stained block. Does the sight of the dread paraphernalia of martyrdom affright him? Oh no! Hear him as he heroically exclaims: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

Of all the motives to which the soul of man is open, none can match the Christian's Hope in power to invest with moral courage, and make men heroes of the noblest style! Never was there a grosser libel than that which the lying spirit of infidelity has sought to fasten upon the Christian religion, by teaching that it enervates and makes cowards of us all. Contemplate the noble army of martyrs whose ranks have been swollen by those of every age, who, in their defence of truth, "have resisted unto blood," in hope of a better resurrection; and then, with holy indignation, hurl back the foul slander to the hell from which it came. Many a battle-field, moistened by the noblest blood of Britain and America, will tell you that bravest among the brave, fighting for the cause of truth and freedom at the bayonet's deadly point, or the thundering cannon's flaming mouth,

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have stood forth those who, having first learned how to live, had best learned how to die!

In the prospect of death, the man who possesses this good Hope, realizes an unearthly power. He may be about to leave associations of the most endearing character. His earthly home may be the dwelling-place of fidelity and love. The wife of his youth, and the dear children of their blended affection, may have entwined themselves around his generous heart. The field of his Christian sympathy and toil may be inviting in its opportunities for usefulness and urgent in its claims. Disease strong and painful may have deeply struck its deadly fangs, and it may be hard work to die, a painful labour to expire. Under any or all of these circumstances, to the partaker of the Christian's Hope, faith lends its realizing light. Heaven seemingly draws nigh, and catching an assuring view of his Father's house, he "longs to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" than any thing earth has to give. More than conqueror through Him who hath loved him, he can say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" After death cometh the judgment—

"That amazing period, when each mountain top.  
Outburns Vesuvius; rocks eternal pour  
Their molten mass, as rivers once were poured;  
Stars rush, and final ruin fiercely drives  
Her ploughshare o'er creation."

Even then, amid the reeling of the staggering earth, the shouts of angels, the howl of devils, and the dismal wailing of the lost,

“Hope undismayed, shall o’er the ruin smile  
And light her torch at nature’s funeral pile.”

Thus shall this Hope invigorate the saint of God until at the bidding of his Saviour, angels receive him into everlasting habitations, where

“Faith shall be sweetly lost in sight,  
And Hope in full, supreme delight,  
And everlasting love.”

And now, what remains for me but to ask, Is this good Hope yours? There are some here who can answer, “Yes, this is our Hope.” If so, Is your Hope as lively and vigorous as it may be? Under its elevating and empowering influence, are you living superior to the charms or ills of earth, and energetically labouring for God? Remembering that it is through grace this Hope is yours, be encouraged to use every effort to induce others to embrace it, and find in its enjoyment, as you yourselves so happily do, “strong consolation.”

Do I address any who have lived up to the present hour without any good Hope? I do not say without *any hope*, since the sorrow is, sinful men have their false and unwarranted hopes of heaven. The sooner they abandon these “refuges of lies,” the better. I do not ask you either, what you have been clinging

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to. It is enough for me to know that it is not the good Hope of the Gospel. Decide, at once, to be a Christian. That Hope of which we speak may be yours to-day, for it is only through grace that any one can embrace it. Repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved and enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This Hope shall, as an anchor to the soul, keep thee safe amid all the vicissitudes of this mortal life ; nor shall it cease to live till thou shalt live forever.

Some time during the last century a ship was wrecked on the coast of Cornwall, England. All hands went down save one sailor boy, who was washed on to the shore, barely living, and who lay bruised and ready to perish for weeks on a sick bed. He was visited by a young man who strove to lead the sinking sailor lad to the cross of Christ, as the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast in the storms of Divine wrath which can destroy both soul and body. "Suppose," said the young man, "that when your vessel was in pieces around about you, off the coast, and you felt yourself sinking exhausted beneath the surge ; suppose that you had caught hold of a plank as it came floating to you, and felt as you clutched it that it bore your weight and would hold you up until relief should come, you would thank God for that plank, would you not ?" "Yes, sir," gasped the boy. The boy was then made to understand that as that plank bore him up, so Jesus Christ could bear up the sink-

ing spirit of the sinner who should trust in Him, amid the tempest of Divine wrath. Many years rolled away, and the Christian Missionary toiled on far distant from the southern coast. One day he was again in a sick room. Every thing there showed it was prepared for a death. The inmates moved about silently and reverently, as men do when they expect the coming of the king of terrors. The sufferer was nearly — nearly gone. The Missionary, true to his old calling, bent down to whisper to the dying man words about the great salvation and the life after death. "Is it well with thy spirit?" asked the old Missionary, and immediately there was a sudden glance of the eye that had begun to fix, and the head turned round, and a last flush covered the white face, and then came a smile — such a smile! "God bless you, sir. The plank bears! the plank bears, sir!" and so it did. It had borne him ever since he had first grasped it in the days long gone by, and clinging to it, he got safe to land. Now, my brethren, lay hold upon and cling with unrelaxing grasp to this "good Hope through grace," and, through all the storms of life, and amid the swellings of Jordan, it shall buoy you up and bear you safe to the coast of a glorious and blissful immortality.

May God add His blessing. AMEN!

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## THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHEUS.

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### SERMON IX.

“And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, and behold there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich, and he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him; for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—LUKE xix. 1-10.

**T**HAT was a stirring day in the ancient Jericho, when, amid the reverberations occasioned by the crash of its fallen walls, the brave Joshua at the head of the exultant army of Israel made his trium-

phal entry, and having put its entire population to the sword, wrapt the accursed city in a sheet of devouring flame.

Some fifteen hundred years later in the world's history, another city occupying the same site, and bearing the same name, was the scene of an extraordinary excitement occasioned by the passage through its streets of the anti-typical Joshua, Jesus of Nazareth. As He approached its gates a certain blind man challenged His sympathy by a loud, reiterated and most pathetic appeal, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" The benevolent Saviour responded by opening the eyes of this earnest applicant—thus achieving a most brilliant miracle. This remarkable display of His divine power was witnessed by a large multitude who were accompanying Him, and who, when they saw what was done for the man, immediately "gave praise unto God," and then, under the influence of grateful and wondering admiration, followed the wonder-working Stranger into the city. Speedily the news of His arrival, and His exciting fame spread far and wide among the inhabitants, who, curious to catch at least a glimpse of this marvellous personage, rushed forth from their dwellings in every direction. Among these was Zaccheus, of whose interesting interview with Christ, and happy conversion, our text informs us. To this important event, connected with our Saviour's visit to Jericho, we invite your attention.

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In considering the conversion of Zaccheus, we shall first observe—

*Who he was.*

The narrative informs us respecting his secular calling, "He was the chief among the publicans; and he was rich." Judea being at that period tributary to the Roman Empire, there were men appointed in various parts of the country to collect the tax exacted from its inhabitants. Zaccheus, though a Jew, was one of those who had been appointed by the Roman Governor to this branch of the public service. These tax-gatherers were popularly styled publicans. Their office was one of great odium and infamy in public estimation, because the people regarded the tax levied by the Romans as a grievous oppression, and because those who gathered it were obliged by their calling to have familiar intercourse with the Gentiles, whom the Jews looked upon as sinners; but the chief cause of its unpopularity was the proverbial injustice practised by the publicans, who farming this tribute of the Emperor at a certain rent, were wont by fraud and violence to extort more than was due from the people, thereby enhancing the lucrateness of their business. Among the publicans of Jericho Zaccheus was the chief — that is, either all the others were subordinate and amenable to him, or, having accumulated considerable wealth by means of his business, he commanded more influence in society than his less fortunate official brethren.



The narrative also gives us some intimations as to his

*Moral Character.*

Apart from the general fact that as a son of Adam he inherited the family failing, that is, a fallen and corrupt nature, we have reasons furnished by this narrative to believe that Zaccheus was not a whit behind any of his disreputable fraternity in the common immoralities of their business. Not that there was any thing morally evil in the business itself, since, on the contrary, it was a just and honourable office, instituted by a lawfully constituted government, but as we have already stated, those who filled it were guilty of making it the instrument of violent extortion. The fact that is here stated — that Zaccheus “was rich,” is sufficient ground for the presumption that he had made the most of his official authority in order to enrich himself; and the circumstance that his fellow-citizens spake of him with so much contempt as being “a man that is a sinner,” favours this opinion. Had his mode of transacting the business of his office been an exception to the general practice of the publicans, we presume he would not have ranked so low in their esteem. And still further is this judgment strengthened by his own acknowledgment made to the Saviour, “If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation.” With these suggestive circumstances before us, we shall not be guilty of any gross transgression of the law of

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Christian charity, should we consider Zaccheus, up to this period in his life, as having been induced by the temptations of his business to play "fast and loose" with his conscience — in other words, as having been a person of very accommodating morality. Thus much as to "Who he was."

In the next place we shall observe—

*The motive by which he was actuated in coming to see Jesus.*

This appears to have been nothing more than a desire to ascertain "who Jesus was," to see in what respects, if in any, He differed from other men. In fine, it was curiosity, and nothing else, that brought him out into the street on this occasion, to join the vast crowd already gathered around the far-famed Nazarene. This principle of curiosity is common to humanity, and when it discovers itself in a spirit of thoughtful, discreet, and patient inquiry, and experiment in science, art, or commerce, it is to be commended rather than condemned. To the just exercise of this propensity of our nature, we are indebted for all progress in these various departments of human thought and achievement. How importantly connected with this man's highest interests this manifestation of curiosity really was, will appear when we consider that had he not yielded to its impulse, he had neither seen the divine Redeemer nor experienced His saving power for himself or family. We never could sympathize with a remark which may be fre-

quently heard made respecting some who may occasionally visit the Christian sanctuary, "O they would be better away, for they come out of mere curiosity." We wonder if, after reading this narrative attentively, they who are accustomed so to express themselves, would say, it had been better for Zaccheus to have remained at home? And yet Zaccheus came to see Jesus from no other motive than mere curiosity. No! in the providence of God we are so constituted as to experience such an impulse, and, by the same authority, it has been ordered that the external arrangements of religion shall more or less powerfully appeal to this feature in our mental character. Of how many in the history of the public services of the church of God has the recording angel taken note, "They came to scoff—but remained to pray."

Instead, therefore, of discouraging any from attending the house of God, let us rather lament that there should be so many whom neither curiosity nor any other motive induces to come within its doors. Be it ours to publish the fame of Jesus at our firesides, in the workshop and in the field, in the busy marts of commerce and wherever we go among our fellows, and seek in every proper way to arouse their curiosity to go to those places where He has promised especially to display His glory and His grace.

In the next place we shall observe—

*The disadvantages against which he had to contend, and the manner in which he overcame them.*

Zaccheus wished to see Jesus, who He was, but could not for the press, "because he was little of stature." Is there any one here who has never been in a crowd? Then let us endeavour to give you some faint idea of such a position. To be in a crowd is to be in the midst of hundreds or thousands of active beings, having, for the time, no more of humanity about them than the shape; and who, in their utter disregard of all the relative claims and duties of society, furnish in their conduct towards each other the most repulsive illustration of selfishness of which you can well conceive. The pressure of a crowd is most unfeeling and imperious. It is the reign of brute force, irrespective of the dictates of either mercy or justice. A tall man, if he have proportionate strength of muscle and will, may possibly make himself both felt and seen, but woe to the unfortunate one whose "bodily presence is weak," whose unenviable doom it is either to be hustled at will by the inconsiderate rudeness of this surging mass of living selfishness, or, what is worse still, to be ignominiously trodden under foot. Such was the nature of those disadvantages against which Zaccheus had to contend in his endeavour to obtain a glimpse of Jesus. There was an uncommon multitude pressing through the streets of Jericho that day, "and Zaccheus was little of stature." Surely, under his peculiar circumstances, this was a great disadvantage. Though previous to this hour he may have often felt dissatisfied with his

diminutive allowance of flesh and blood, it is probable he never before experienced such painful mortification as now burned within his anxious, fluttering bosom. Well, what did he do? Did he give up in sullen despair, and, charging God foolishly for having denied him a more athletic frame, retrace his steps homewards? No, no! Despite his unpretending exterior, Zaccheus had more vigor in him than such conduct would betray. Why, the ingenuity and determination he evinced in overcoming these difficulties not unworthily illustrate the popular axiom —

“The mind’s the standard of the man!”

Unlike the fabled traveller who sat down on the bank of an intercepting river, vainly waiting for its flowing waters to exhaust their source, ere he should advance on his journey, Zaccheus, instead of foolishly staying for the crowd to disperse so that his curiosity might be gratified by a sight of Jesus, with admirable presence of mind and manly energy, ran before the dense crowd and climbed up a favouring sycamore tree, and there, comfortably ensconced among its branches, confidently awaited the worthy object of his desire; “for Jesus had to pass that way.” Such, then, were his disadvantages, and such was the enterprising manner in which he surmounted them.

Just here let us remark that if any man supposes he can be saved without encountering difficulty under some form or another, he will only need to make the

attempt in order to be convinced of his most egregious mistake. The righteous are "scarcely," or "with difficulty," saved. This arises, not from any lack of divine disposition or power to save them, but from the combined opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. How frequently are men heard saying: "I can never be a Christian; my heart is so hard," or "my temper is so crooked and ungovernable," or "my social position is so unfavorable." These and a host more of such personal or relative disadvantages are adduced why they should live and die the slaves of sin, and the silly dupes of the great deceiver. If we are addressing any whose way to the Saviour is thus hedged up, then let us tell you plainly that the real difficulty with you is not either your hard heart, your crooked temper, or aught else you have mentioned, but your want of that solicitude and invincible determination which find expression in such language as this:—

"My vehement soul cries out, oppress,  
Impatient to be freed;  
Nor can I, Lord, nor will I rest,  
Till I am saved indeed!"

Be assured, unsaved brethren, that except you possess and exercise in your efforts to secure salvation, an energy like that of Zaccheus, who, finding that standing upon the very tiptoe, would not command the coveted view of Jesus, ran and climbed the lofty sycamore, you never can be saved. "Strive," said Christ,

“to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in but shall not be able.” In fine, the greatest difficulty in the way of a sinner’s salvation is the want of a sufficiently strong purpose to be saved. Let this be removed, and the rest of the work is comparatively easy.

In the next place, pursuing the narrative still further, we observe—

*The Saviour’s especial recognition of Zaccheus, and the interesting proposals which He made to him.*

“And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house!”

When Zaccheus climbed up into that tree to get a view of Jesus, little did he imagine, we presume, the distinguished honour of which he was so soon to be made the subject. How mysteriously beautiful are many of the movements and contrivances of Divine Providence! Behold with what exquisite precision the arrangements of His infinite wisdom are evolved in this man’s case! Unenviably distinguished from the great majority of his fellow-men, by the inferiority of his stature, as Zaccheus may have considered himself, he is now privileged to read the long-sought “wherefore” of this providential allotment, in the greatest blessing of his whole life. The littleness of his stature was the immediate cause of his betaking himself to the sycamore tree, and his lodgment

among its branches seems to have been the ostensible occasion of his receiving that particular notice which the Saviour bestowed upon him. Doubtless there was a peculiar power exerted upon the heart of Zaccheus through the medium of that look which the Saviour cast upon him, and also in the unexpected address which came to his ear directly from the lips of Him who "spake as never man spake," "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house!" How these words would thrill and startle his whole soul! To be so fully recognized and so familiarly addressed by one who he had no reason to suppose knew anything about him, would dispose him, like Nathaniel, to inquire "Whence knowest thou me?" This highly interesting proof of His omniscience, together with the miracle which He had just performed, would powerfully convince Zaccheus of the divinity of the Saviour. And, Oh who can tell how much of the spiritual import of the words "to-day I must abide at thy house," was revealed to the mind of Zaccheus by the spirit of Christ? What ideas of holy fellowship with Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, may have been formed within his soul as those words, illuminated by divine light, were rolled out before his mental vision! From these particulars may we not learn something about the way the blessed Saviour still deals with those whose hearts are burning with desire to see Him? Do we not perceive how quickly His penetrating eye



detects the earliest movement of a sinner's thoughts towards Himself? May we not thence learn to appreciate the feeblest, the smallest desire for salvation? "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord!" seeing that Christ singles them out from all besides, and converses with them as He does not with the world, making the most affectionate, assuring and urgent proposals to them, saying: "I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me!"

Consider also, dear brethren, by what a multiplicity of means and instruments a gracious Saviour seeks to bring His guilty, erring, and wayward creature, man, to feel after God if haply he may find Him. Health and sickness, pleasure and pain, friends and foes, disappointments and losses, and even the imperfections of their persons, are only some of the endless train of circumstances employed by an all-wise and ever-gracious God to accomplish the spiritual and eternal good of those who, by nature and practice, are alienated from Him.

Passing on in the narrative, we observe —

*Zaccheus's prompt and cordial compliance with the Saviour's request, and the great good accruing therefrom to himself and family.*

The readiness and delight with which Zaccheus responded to the appeal of the Saviour, indicate a gracious preparedness of heart to receive Christ, not merely as a transient guest within his house, but as a Saviour from sin, to dwell forever within his soul.

Zaccheus was a rich man, and in all probability not much given to do the obsequious and the complaisant in his intercourse with society, piquing himself, no doubt, on the independence of his pecuniary circumstances. That he should, therefore, have so unhesitatingly complied with the unceremonious demand made by the Saviour both upon the hospitalities of his house, and his personal attentions, can be reasonably accounted for in no other way than by believing him to have been powerfully wrought upon by that same divine Spirit who, at a subsequent time, opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken to her by Paul, and whose office it is to co-operate with, and justify the teachings of Christ.

Yielding himself up to the generous influence exerted within his heart by this Omniscient Agent, Zaccheus descended from the tree with his utmost agility, and, having greeted the Saviour with that unaffected earnestness which is begotten of warm and honest affection, he conducted him to his home, and did all within his power to assure his truly illustrious guest that He was inexpressibly welcome to the best entertainment his house could afford.

Just as they were about to enter the house, a circumstance occurred which afforded Zaccheus an opportunity to exhibit his real state of feeling. The multitude from whom the Saviour had withdrawn, when he entered the house of Zaccheus, murmured, saying, "That He was gone to be guest with a man

that was a sinner." Instead of attempting to veil or palliate the misdeeds of his guilty past, or resenting this unexpected exposure of his immoral character by either noisily and passionately contradicting their assertions, or boldly defying their ability to prove what they had said, he, on the contrary, meekly stood before Jesus, and, in the hearing of the multitude who had so gratuitously trumpeted his infamy, penitently and ingenuously confessed his sins, and expressed his becoming and consistent purposes of future amendment and restitution, saying: "Behold," (or bear me witness,) "Lord! the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

No sooner had Zaccheus ceased speaking than Jesus, addressing the multitude, bore testimony to the sincerity of this penitential declaration, by saying, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." He thus seems to say: "Admitting that Zaccheus is all that you would represent him to be, be it known to you all, that I do, this day, forgive him his sins and cleanse him from unrighteousness, forasmuch as he, by his manifest repentance and faith, hath proved himself to be a true 'son of Abraham!' And not only shall he experience the salvation of God himself, but his family, likewise, shall partake with him of the benefits which are exclusively mine to bestow: 'For the

Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost!" O what a happy era was this in the history of this family, introduced, as they were, by spiritual birth into the kingdom of grace, and constituted heirs of an incorruptible inheritance! Who can properly estimate the value of those blessings which were dispensed that day in the family of Zaccheus by that Saviour whom they had welcomed to their hearts as well as to their abode? And now, dear brethren, how often has the Saviour addressed some of you, saying, "Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house," but you still continue strangers to the joys of His salvation! How is this? Has not pride, unbelief, prejudice, love of the world, the fear of man, or some equally pernicious principle, been allowed to dwell in your hearts and dispose you to slight the blessed and patient Redeemer? O, had you years ago but promptly obeyed your convictions of duty, and received the Saviour into your hearts, how widely and pleasingly different would it have been with yourselves and your families from what it now unhappily is? Is the long-suffering, though oft-insulted Saviour, challenging your attentions to-night? Hesitate no longer, but say—

"Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest,  
Nor ever hence remove!  
But sup with us, and let the feast  
Be everlasting love!"

Thank God, some to whom we speak can well re-

member the period when it was first said of them, "This day is salvation come to this house." What a happy day was that! At the close of his life, Byron,—

"A man of rank and of capacious soul,  
Who riches had, and fame beyond desire,  
An heir of flattery, to titles born,  
And reputation, and luxurious life,"

is reported to have remarked, "that he had only had eleven happy days out of it all." But you, beloved, how many happy days have you had

"Since Jesus washed your sins away,  
And taught you how to watch and pray,  
And live rejoicing every day?"

What a change religion has made in your families! Are you not overwhelmed with a sense of the divine goodness to you and your's? May God multiply these happy homes in our midst.

Looking once more at the narrative, we observe —

*The censorious spirit expressed by the unbelieving world in viewing the Saviour's conduct, and the Saviour's vindication of the course He had pursued.*

"They murmured, saying, that He had gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner;" to which the Saviour replied: "for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." By styling Zaccheus "a sinner," the multitude could not have meant that he was merely a Gentile, or a Heathen, that is "a sinner of the Gentiles." This they could not have

intended, since he was a Jew, a fact doubtless patent to them all, but they evidently wished to brand him as a vile and wicked man. When they saw Christ about to enter the house of this man, purposing to abide with him for the rest of the day, they murmured and uttered that saying as a censure upon his conduct. So the Saviour understood it, and hence His magnificent reply, "for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Thus he sought to teach them, that though Zaccheus was even more vile than they regarded him as being; still, in going to visit him, He was only fulfilling the great object of His benevolent mission to our world. In that censure the religion of that age found expression. What was that religion? That religion was a vain, pompous, sanctimonious, heartless, long-winded hypocrisy, and something a little worse, if possible. And that we are not out-travelling the record in what we have said, you will discover by reading the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, where, among much more about them, it is written, "for they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in!" The answer that the Saviour gave, was a well-aimed blow at these monsters of duplicity, who, in the eyes

of the public, with well-affected squeamishness strained at the gnat—but behind the veil of private life, without any inconvenient contortions—swallowed the camel. And brethren, does not a great deal of the philosophy of our own times, find a deliverance of its sentiment in the slur, “He has gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner?” The disciples of a sceptical rationalism, too largely patronized in the present day, scarcely know where to begin, or where to end their fault-finding with Christianity. Christianity is too simple and pure for them. According to their luminous judgment it is grossly unreasonable, and though they may have been favoured to inhale the invigorating atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge, their intellectual digestion refuses its miracles, its prophecies, and its grace. With them the Bible Society and the Missionary Institutions of the day are increasingly intolerable nuisances. May not a very close resemblance be traced between the censure passed upon Christianity of old, and much that passes current for orthodoxy among the religious of the present time? Is there not a vast deal of ecclesiastical aristocracy in our day? Despised Methodists, or shouting Ranters, or any one else, may in their loving zeal for God and men, descend into the perilous and loathsome depths of social wretchedness and degradation, to gather pearls with which to embellish the coronet of their Redeemer; but such service as this is not sufficiently elevated and refined for these

saintly ineffables. To all of these Christianity has the one answer to give, viz: "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." To the sceptic, we may say, "favour us with a satisfactory solution of the undeniable fact, that the Christianity which you say is so obnoxious to reason, and so obstructive of intellectual, moral and political progress, should have achieved such startling wonders in the development of mind, the improvement of morals, and the civilization of nations of mankind; and that in the face of all the formidable opposition which has been arrayed against her. Explain this fact, or at least—ere you put forth your giant energy to pull down the time-honoured temple, within whose walls our sainted ancestry have devoutly worshipped—provide for us another whose transcendent advantages shall justify the change.

To those who, professing the Christian faith, are wont to "pass by on the other side," and Priest and Levite-like, look with unpitying eye upon the wretched children of moral wretchedness and want; to such we would say, Christianity has a mission to fulfil in our world, a mission of mercy and salvation to the lost, to be achieved by the devotion of its disciples and friends. Animated by its spirit, and guided by its precepts, a Howard and a Wilberforce, a Wesley and a Whitfield, a Coke and a Carey, with a host of other genuine philanthropists, have already gone forth on their errands of mercy and love to earth's darkest



dens of physical and moral destitution, suffering, and woe.

It is said that once during the performance of a comedy in the Roman theatre, one of the actors gave utterance to the sentiment, "I am a man ; nothing therefore that is human can be foreign to me !" and the audience were so struck by its disinterestedness, or so charmed by its novelty, that they greeted it with thunders of applause. And may not every lover of the Saviour say : "I am a Christian, and, therefore, any thing that is Christian, can never be foreign to me !" Since, therefore, the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost, and as the salvation of universal man is necessary to the consummation of His object, we still must labour with Him and for Him, praying with earnestness while we tirelessly toil,

" Arise O God, maintain Thy cause !  
The fulness of the Gentiles call :  
Lift up the standard of Thy cross,  
And all shall own Thou died'st for all ! "

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

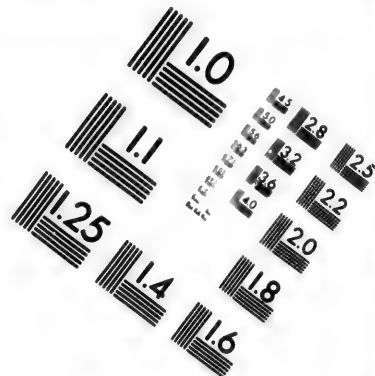
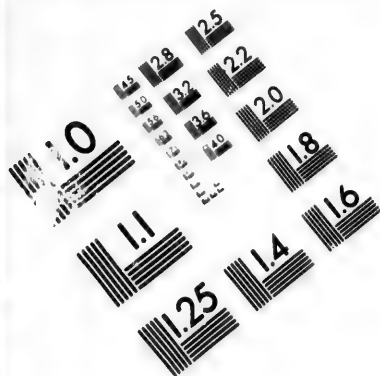
### SERMON X.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead."—1 Cor. xv. 20.

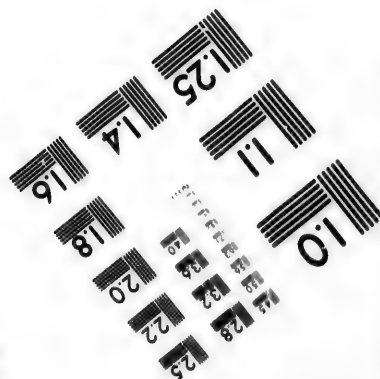
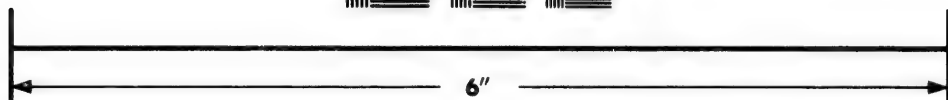
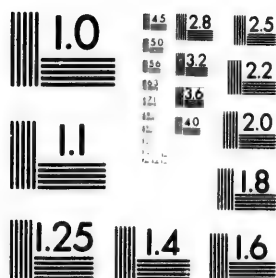
**I**N the estimation of the Christian Church every portion of the history of her illustrious Head is replete with interest.

His mysterious incarnation; His meritorious death; His triumphant resurrection, and His glorious ascension, are events upon which her holy religion is founded, and consequently are regarded by her as invested with commanding importance in comparison of other circumstances which contribute to the glory of His mediatorial career. To commemorate these prominent facts in the history of Redemption, the early Christians, in pious wisdom, set apart certain days in every year. This practice has survived the more or less extensive changes which the formulary of the Christian church has undergone since the Apostolic age, and commands, as it justly merits, the practical approval of the majority of those who at the present day profess and call themselves Christians.

In recognition of this custom you have lately been



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pondering the Passion and Death of your Divine Redeemer. You have, in holy thought, visited Gethsemane and beheld your Saviour prostrate there in agony extreme; and as you have witnessed His bloody sweat, and listened to His moving appeals to heaven, you have been overwhelmed with soul-felt sorrow, and your riven hearts in sympathy have bled. Thence, you have accompanied Him to the judgment hall of cowardly Pilate, and thence to Calvary, and standing beneath His cross, have heard His groans, seen His streaming blood, and beheld Him bow His sacred head and give up the ghost. You have seen His blood-stained body taken down from the cross, carried to the sepulchre, and deposited there as the spoil of the monster, Death.

The whole of this mournful tragedy has passed before your vision, and as you have gazed upon it, floods of unaffected grief have deluged your spirits.

But, ye Christians! Ye friends of Jesus! Ye redeemed of Heaven! No longer mourn! Dry up your tears, and shout for joy! Your Saviour lives again! Christ is risen from the dead, and to-day His church invites you to celebrate His brilliant triumph!

No longer inhabiting the gloomy tomb, but laden with the spoils of Death, your Redeemer speaks to you from heaven, saying, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore."

That our confidence in the Resurrection of Christ may be strengthened, and our gratitude, joy, and hope

correspondingly increased, we shall proceed to consider—

*The Evidence we have of that event.*

Should the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection ever be blotted out from the creed of the church it will not be on account of the insufficiency of its claims upon the faith of mankind, since there is no lack of evidence that the event actually occurred. To ascertain the truth of the doctrine we cannot do better than examine carefully the foundation upon which it is based. This foundation is composed of evidence of a three-fold kind, viz: *presumptive, positive, and demonstrative.*

*We have PRESUMPTIVE Evidence of the event.*

That Christ did actually die, is an important point to be determined; for, to be certain of His resurrection, there must be no doubt in our minds respecting the fact of His death; since if we do not believe the death, it is useless to investigate the resurrection. What is the Scripture testimony concerning His death? The four Evangelists all testify that He gave up the ghost. The soldiers who, in accordance with usage, were sent to hasten the death of the victims by breaking their legs, when they came to Jesus brake not His legs, *because He was dead already.* And then, as though Divine Providence—forecasting the incredulity and infidelity of our own age—would fortify the citadel of truth against all successful assaults from such a quarter, permitted one of the soldiers—

more inhuman than the rest—to thrust his spear into the Saviour's side, and “forthwith came there out both water and blood;” which result, subjected to the criticism of the advanced physiological science of to-day, is an incontrovertible evidence of the total extinction of life.

The death of Christ having been thus firmly established, we are informed that His body was placed by the hands of honourable affection in a new sepulchre, and the tomb closed and guarded by a great stone having been rolled to the door. Moreover, the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive (a proof, thus incidentally given, that they believed Him to be dead), after three days I will rise again: command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

His burial is thus strongly certified. On the morning of the third day following His death, the sepulchre was found empty. The question then is simply this: Did Christ arise, or was His body removed? If removed, by whom was the act performed? Either it was done by His enemies, or by His friends. Sup-

pose that his enemies removed the body, what motive could have induced them to give occasion for such a report as that of His resurrection, which must so greatly militate against themselves? And had they removed, and possessed the body, would they not have produced it, most strongly to contradict the report of the disciples, that Christ had risen from the dead?

If the body was removed, and the enemies of Christ did not do it, then its removal must be charged upon His friends. But were His friends such men as were likely to conceive, undertake, and accomplish so bold and hazardous an enterprise as that of defying the Jewish Council, and successfully assailing a heavy guard of Roman soldiers, fully armed and on the alert? Allowing, however, for the sake of argument, that they surprised and overcame the guard, and stole the body, what motives could they have had for doing so? If Christ did not rise from the dead, they could not but regard Him as having been the basest and most cruel imposter ever known, and why, therefore, should they risk so much to obtain His worthless body?

But the guard circulate the report, "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept." What is the history of this report? It is this: The soldiers having witnessed the fact of the resurrection, some of their number went immediately into the city and showed unto the Chief Priests all the things



that were done. "And when the Chief Priests were assembled with the Elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept. And if this come to the Governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money and did as they were taught." The Evangelist adds: "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." Now this story about the disciples is "too thin." It carries its contradiction on its very face. Either the soldiers were awake or asleep. If awake, why allow themselves to be overcome by a few unarmed men? If they were asleep, then how dare they pretend to say what was done while they slept? The story, therefore, falls to the ground, reflecting very little credit upon its authors for either veracity or wit.

If, then, His friends did not remove the body, and it was not removed by His enemies, then it was not removed at all, and the other alternative must be true, "that He rose from the dead."

So much for the Presumptive: let us next consider—

*The POSITIVE Evidence we have of this event.*

This class of evidence is found in the testimony of the disciples of Christ. They affirm that He rose from the dead. Is their testimony reliable? We claim that it is, and enforce that claim by the following considerations, viz:—

1. *The character of the witnesses.*

Had they been men manifestly born to rule, to sway the minds and mould the opinions of their fellow men ; had they been distinguished by great social influence, as sagacious statesmen or subtle politicians accustomed to indoctrinate the masses with their own peculiar views ; had they been possessed of abundant wealth, then it might, with some reason, be supposed possible for them to have practised so skilfully upon the credulity or avarice of the multitude as to have brought them over to their side of the question. Such, however, were not the men. They were simple-minded, unsophisticated and poor, without authority to command, wit to deceive, or wealth to bribe. Consider —

2. *Their number.*

We could conceive it possible that a few persons might be the subjects of some strange hallucination, and, though perfectly sincere, both believe and publish the grossest absurdities and the most unwarrantable falsehoods. And we could believe that a few men might purposely concoct such a story, and engage in the work of deceiving others with it. When, however, we are assured that not merely a few, but five hundred persons testify to having seen the risen Christ, we cannot think they were all rogues, or were all so strangely deceived. Consider —

3. *Their statements.*

If their declarations had been about abstruse sub-

jects, something pertaining to some of the sciences — say, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics or language — then it might have been beyond the power of the great majority of mankind intelligently to deny their truth. Had they concerned some event or person in the distant past, or in some other part of the world, then the community might not have felt sufficient interest in the matter, to inquire as to their truth or falsity. But their statements referred to facts which had just occurred relating to Jesus, whose fame had spread far and wide. They affirmed that they had seen Him, heard Him, handled Him, walked with Him, ate with Him, and thus, it would be more difficult to believe them to have been deceived in all this than to admit what they testified to be real and true. Consider —

4. *The agreement of their testimony.*

We all know somewhat of the difficulty, either to establish or disprove the identity of an individual. The recently closed trial of the Tichborne claimant proves this most impressively. How seldom is it the case that even two persons who have witnessed the same transaction, when called to give their testimony respecting it, will agree in every particular. Now, whoever heard that any of those witnesses ever contradicted the other's statements in any respect? Is not this remarkable? Does it not greatly strengthen their claim upon our confidence? Consider —

5. *The parties to whom they bore their testimony.*

Wherever they went, they “preached Jesus and

the Resurrection." Among their hearers were those who were certainly capable of criticising their story and discovering any fraud, if such were sought to be perpetrated upon public faith. To Jews and heathen, philosophers and lawyers, ecclesiastics and statesmen, they testified these things. Certainly had there been any flaw or discrepancy in their testimony, these were the men to detect and proclaim it. If their declarations were false, how came they to go unchallenged? Consider—

*6. The period when they testified these things.*

While the heart of Jerusalem was yet throbbing with the excitement created by His crucifixion, the wondrous story was being circulated along the streets of that city, that He had risen from the dead. If it were not true, then was the time to refute the falsehood. The circumstances of the tragedy, and the burial, were all fresh in the memory of the people. Had the disciples nothing but a mere fabrication to palm off upon the community, they would scarcely have chosen such a time to publish it. Consider—

*7. The place where they gave this testimony.*

Had these men been imposters, they would have sought some foreign country, and not have published the story, as they did, on the very spot where their hero had been put to death and buried, and where His mouldering remains could have been produced to overwhelm them with confusion. Consider—

8. *The motives by which these witnesses were actuated in bearing this testimony.*

Assuming that these men were deceivers, we are utterly at a loss to find any motive to incite them to such a course as this. On the contrary, a thousand reasons might be urged why they would not do it. To do as they did, was to hazard their honour, their happiness, their property, and their lives. But they bore this testimony and persisted in doing so, and many of them sealed their unfaltering evidence with their blood even unto death. It either was true, or they believed it to be so. The most powerful conviction of the fact on their part, can alone satisfactorily explain their conduct. So much for the Positive testimony.

Another class of evidence awaits our attention, viz :—

*The DEMONSTRATIVE.*

The decided change apparent in the Apostles immediately subsequent to this period, furnishes a demonstrative proof that Christ had risen from the dead, or that they believed Him to have done so.

Had Christ not come forth from the tomb, as He had authorized them to expect He would do, the effect of such a bitter disappointment upon the spirits of the disciples, would have been to render them dejected, hopeless, and weak. On the contrary, from having been sad, irresolute and timid men, they suddenly assumed the presence, the language, and the

daring of heroes. Seemingly inspired with an enlarged and irrepressible faith in the risen Christ, they went everywhere, fearless of bonds, imprisonment, scourgings, and even death itself,—preaching, with a strange, undaunted boldness, “Jesus and the Resurrection.” Even Peter, who so recently had been overtaken with such enervating cowardice as meanly to surrender his manliness and honour to the harmless challenge of a servant maid, respecting fellowship with Christ; *even he* now plays a part more conspicuous and courageous than all other of the Apostles, in testifying to the very murderers of the Saviour, that God had raised Him up from the dead.

The Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost was another demonstration that Christ had risen from the dead. Such was the view taken of the Christian Pentecost by the Apostle Peter, who, in the midst of those spiritual phenomena characterising that event, addressing his Jewish countrymen, said, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.”

So also the Miracles wrought by the Apostles afforded further proof of the Resurrection of Christ. The Saviour had said, previous to His departure from them, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they

shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." How strikingly these words were fulfilled we all remember who have read the Acts of the Apostles; and how invariably did those divinely endowed men appeal to the physical and moral marvels, which they wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, as confirmatory evidence of His resurrection from the dead, and exaltation to the right hand of God! By these mighty signs and wonders did they give witness with great power of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.

Again: The rapid spread and astonishing triumphs of Christianity in those early stages of its history, powerfully demonstrated the fact of the Resurrection of Christ.

Within two centuries from the period of His resurrection, the religion of Christ had become more widely disseminated than any other religion, true or false. Despite the strong prejudices in favour of Judaism, engendered and fostered by the undeniable facts of its divine origin, and antiquity of existence, the doctrines of the Nazarene were signally successful among the Jews. Among the Gentile nations where heathenism was enthroned, armed with imperial power and wealthy in resources of secular stability, Christianity achieved its most extensive and characteristic victories. Thus, Irenæus affirms that in his

time not only those who dwelt near Palestine, but the Egyptians, the Libyans, the Celts, the Germans had one belief; nay, says he, "the preaching of the truth shines every where, and enlightens all men who are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth." So also Tertullian wrote in the end of the second century: "In whom else have all nations believed, but in Christ who lately came? In whom have all these nations believed—Parthians, Medes, Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Capadocia; the inhabitants of Pontus and Asia, and Pamphylia; they that dwell in Egypt and they who live in Africa, beyond Cyrene; Romans and strangers; Jews and of other nations in Jerusalem; the various sorts of people in Getulea; the many countries of the Moors; all the borders of Spain; the different nations of Gaul; and those parts of Britain which the Romans could not reach, *even they* are subject to Christ; in all these the name of Christ, lately as He came, reigns. The kingdom of Christ is every where extended, every where received; in all the above-mentioned nations is esteemed. He reigns every where, is adored in all places, is divided equally amongst all known countries." According to Porphyry and Julian, so wonderful was the success attending the promulgation of Christianity in all nations, that it soon obtained the name of the "*universal* or the *prevailing doctrine*." Whence, then, did the new religion acquire this mysterious and inextinguish-



able potency? Was it from Heaven, or of men? No natural cause can account for it. The cause is to be found alone in the omnipotence of the truth of God. That truth was proclaimed by the Apostles in the name of Jesus Christ, whom God raised up from the dead. Every instance of success witnessed by these Apostolic ambassadors was an additional token given from heaven that their doctrine was the truth, and their testimony reliable, and thus impressively demonstrated the fact that Christ was "risen indeed."

We shall pursue our inquiry respecting the certainty of Christ's Resurrection no further. The reason why we entered upon an investigation of this subject, was not because we supposed any of you entertained any doubts upon this article of the Christian faith, but that our confidence in our holy religion might be strengthened and confirmed by taking a walk this morning round about Zion; and marking her bulwarks and counting her towers, might thank God for her pillars of strength. Among all those mighty columns upon which the Christian Temple is built, there is none of greater strength and service than the Resurrection of Christ. Indeed the important bearing of this event upon the Christian religion cannot be over-rated. What the keystone is to the arch in masonry, such may the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection be regarded as being to the grand fabric of our holy faith. As the great confirmatory miracle of the New Testament it looms up in unique singularity. By it the

Divinity of Christ's person and mission is established, and the truth of His teachings confirmed. It evidences the efficacy of Christ's death as an atonement for the world's sin. In that event we have also a pledge and pattern of the resurrection of the human race, and assurance given to all men that God will ultimately judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.

While we visit the vacated sepulchre to-day, let us join with the universal church in anthems of gratitude and praise, saying, "the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly!" Then, soaring on wings of holy, joyful faith to the heaven of heavens, identify the enthroned Jesus, and join the adoring host of the redeemed from earth, exclaiming as we gaze upon His glorious person, "the stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes!"

Spiritually planted by regenerating and sanctifying grace, in the likeness of His death, and raised up to a holy life in the likeness of His resurrection, may we all live in Him, and for Him, that when He who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory!

May God add His blessing. Amen!

## ACHAN; OR, SIN'S CERTAIN EXPOSURE.

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### SERMON XI.

“And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day: and all Israel stoned him with stones.”—JOSHUA vii. 25.

THE Bible may be regarded as a record of the saints. On its luminous pages are inscribed the names of a vast multitude, who illustrated the loftiest virtue while they lived, and who, being dead, yet speak. Their characters as delineated by the pen of divine inspiration still shine forth as the most perfect specimens of moral excellence ever wrought out of human material. Be it ours while we make these exquisite models our study, not merely to admire them, but successfully imitate the characteristic beauties which they so strikingly develop.

But the Bible may also be considered a book of warnings. Amid the scenes which it so graphically depicts, the evil actions of wicked men, both within and without the church of the living God, loom up above the level of ordinary events, and by reason of the flaming vengeance of Heaven with which they

were followed, may be likened to so many admonitory beacon-lights, placed by the hand of sovereign mercy, on the shoals and iron-bound coast of moral ruin. "They are for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." The history of Achan may be viewed in this light, and having selected it for our study this evening, we shall at once enter upon its discussion.

The history of Achan *illustrates the nature of sin.*

Sin is the violation of a known and practicable law. "Whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." The circumstances of Achan's crime were these: The city of Jericho was being encompassed by the army of Israel, under the leadership of the skilful general Joshua. This distinguished officer, having obeyed the instructions which he had received from the God of battles, was just about to witness the complete success of those heaven-directed manœuvres, which had so far been faithfully executed. Just at this crisis, when the thirteenth circuit of the city had been finished, Joshua lifted up his voice, and said—"Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, and ye in anywise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord;

they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." Such was the restrictive and prohibitory law which was announced in the hearing of the entire army, and which it was the duty of every man in that army sacredly to respect.

This law Achan violated, inasmuch as he stole some of the spoil of the city, and secreted it in the earth beneath the floor of his tent.

*Sin produces guilt.*

No sooner had Achan obtained possession of the objects of his covetousness, then he buried them in the earth. What prompted that course? The fear of detection, you answer. But what inspired that fear? Naught but the consciousness of having done wrong. That is guilt: it is the first-born of sin. This dark-browed and pale-faced child of transgression, shy and sneaking, trembling and treacherous, haunts every land, and lives in every clime. It is literally a cosmopolite, a citizen of the world, proving by the universality of its presence in our world, the universality of human sin. Not only do we hear its unmistakeable utterances in those lands which are consecrated by the temples of revealed religion, within whose walls wailing penitents smite upon their breast, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" but amid the cruel, vile and loathsome rites of heathenism, does sinful man proclaim his iniquity and his guilt.

*Sin is disastrous in its relative influence.*

Joshua inquires of Achan, "Why hast thou troubled

us?" He alludes to the following circumstances: Having taken possession of Jericho, Joshua contemplated an attack upon the city of Ai, which was about twelve miles distant. As a preparatory step, he sent spies in advance to view the country. These men went up to Ai, reconnoitred the city, and, returning to Joshua, said to him: "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai, and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few!" So Joshua detailed about three thousand men and sent them up to take possession of Ai. "And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men, for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water." How was this? The only reason assigned in this history is—"for Achan took of the accursed thing." This single crime had impaired the military prestige of the nation, and dimmed the glory of the church. The civil and religious in the state of the Israelitish people had been divinely interlinked. Their glory as a nation, and their purity as a church, were closely allied to each other. As a nation, they were now humbled in the presence of a comparatively contemptible foe, having suffered a most inglorious defeat at the hands of the few men of Ai. The spies had testified that the enemy were but a few men. Nor can we attribute this opinion to the overweening vanity of self-inflated

spirits! Such would not be the men whom Joshua would select for so important a mission. No! in the nation there was one man who had presumptuously trampled upon the law of Heaven, and that circumstance alone had taken effect in the panic which seized the three thousand of Israel's valiant soldiers, and caused them to flee in trembling cowardice before the onslaught of the men of Ai, leaving thirty-six of their comrades behind them, stretched in the rigidity of a shameful death. And here permit me to observe: If England's soldiers are still invincible on the field, and if her gallant tars still bravely hold the freedom of the ocean for their royal mother, it is not because no wrong-doing shades the glory of her throne, or no evil deforms the character of her churches, but because of the forbearance of Jehovah, exercised towards the nation in answer to the prayers of the faithful few.

But Joshua may be regarded as putting this question to Achan in behalf of the church. The church asks Achan: "Why hast thou troubled us?" The Lord had forsaken them, and threatened to return no more because Achan had sinned. Achan may be considered as having been a member of that church. He had abandoned himself to sin, and the result was the entire church lost power with God. Note, my brethren, the terrible power of one sin in a church! One sin may neutralize every sermon, render every prayer meeting powerless, and counteract the efforts of a whole church to enlarge her borders. There is

nothing so enervating to the body of Christ as the secret sins of her members. Let the children of this world enthroned on seats of civil power persecute the church of God; let them hale men and women to prison, and drag them thence to feed with their persons the furious flames of martyrdom. Let hell rally all its forces, and concentrate its energies, and tax its intellect to the utmost to withstand and crush the spreading cause of the Redeemer; so long as the church continues true to herself, her country and her God, like a rock-girt Isle, she shall untremblingly resist the heaving surges of the vast ocean of combined opposition, and unharmed enjoy her own internal quiet. But let the devil succeed in inoculating one of her members with the virus of sin, and the baleful effect is felt throughout the entire body of the church in moral asphyxia and paralysis; or let him kindle one unholy passion in a single breast, and a train is fired which, sooner or later must spring a mine of evil that may involve countless numbers in irretrievable ruin. One seed of disease may destroy the body; one spark fire the magazine; one traitor neutralize an entire campaign; one sinner destroy much good. Achan was verily guilty of the blood of those thirty-six men who fell before the men of Ai, in consequence of his secret sin; but, brethren, the sin of one member of the church of Christ may occasion the spiritual and eternal death of scores of precious souls. To such a man, God saith, "their blood will I require at thy hands!"



The history of Achan *exemplifies and enforces one of the most impressive utterances of Divine law, viz : "be sure your sins will find you out !"*

In this connection we may glance at—  
*The discovery of Achan's guilt.*

Under those circumstances of disaster and distress which we have just contemplated, what did Joshua do ? Did he call a court-martial and impeach the character of the men who had fled home from Ai ? Did he charge them with the foul blot that had been cast upon the national escutcheon ? Did he go from tribe to tribe, and impute this humiliating defeat to this or to that man ? No ! No !! No !!! What did he do ? Why, brethren, behold him gathering together the *Elders* of Israel, the *venerable men* whose locks were whitened with age, and whose virtue had been tested in many an hour of peril, such as was well suited to prove their physical and moral calibre,—men in whom he had unshaken confidence. Accompanied by these men he approached the ark of the Lord, then rending his clothes in the inexpressible anguish of his grieved spirit, he joined his venerable officers in their prostration before the Ark. With dust upon their heads and lying upon their faces on the ground, they remained there until the eventide. Then Joshua poured into the ear of Heaven the most pathetic and powerful appeal that could be made, bewailing in the most sad and touching manner the dishonour which had been done to the name and cause of God. Brethren, what

a lesson is here for us ! Do we lament the dearth of vital godliness in the land ? Are we painfully mortified by the manifest inefficiency of every effort to secure a revival of the work of God among us ? Then what are we doing ? There may be those who say the fault is in the pulpit,—others may refer it to the pew. Some may charge it to the minister, or to the office-bearer, or to this, or to that professor ; but, brethren, how few think of carrying the matter where Joshua carried his burden, to the throne of God, and, in the spirit of deep self-abasement, plead with Him, saying : “ Show us wherefore thou contendest with us ! ” Brethren, let us learn the lesson ! Joshua’s prayer is heard : “ And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up ; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face ? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them ; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.” Joshua is then instructed how to proceed in order to the discovery of the guilty party. Thus directed he cast lots for the tribe, the family, the household and the individual, and “ Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah was taken.” Achan, in all probability, had accomplished his theft as adroitly as though he had graduated in such a school of robbery as a modern London or New York would afford. He first prepared a hiding place

for his booty by digging a hole in the earth beneath the floor of his tent. The next step was to secure it. Can you not imagine you see him stealing forth under the covert of the midnight darkness, and wending his way with noiseless footfall across the space intervening between his tent and the coveted spoil? He reaches the spot where he had seen the articles lying during the day. They are there! His heart leaps with jerking pulse, as with nervous grasp he seizes them, and then retraces his steps with suppressed breathing to his tent. He enters and deposits them, and carefully replaces the earth and the flooring. His perilous work over, he flings himself down upon his bed and congratulates himself on his flattering success. Nothing, thought he, could have been more favorable—the night just dark enough; no moon; a cloudy sky; not a living creature astir; perfect! admirable!! He was right. Not a man throughout the entire camp had the remotest idea of such a deed as this being transacted in their midst that night. But, brethren, the police were on the scout, and he was seen and followed. Do you ask, "Who are they?" They are "the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro, beholding both the evil and the good." These invisible detectives are ubiquitous. "For there is no darkness nor secret place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves" (or their stuff either) "that I shall not see them, saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" Achan had,

therefore, been closely watched, and now the dread hour of exposure had arrived, and he who so recently had considered himself the most fortunate of men, stands forth in the sight of God and man the trembling victim of his own sin, and the unsheltered object of Jehovah's curse. Nor has this been the only instance in which, by a train of providentially discovered circumstances, deeds of covert wickedness have been brought to light. Besides other cases recorded in the Bible such as Gehazi, Haman, Ananias and Sapphira, the records of crime in all ages contain the account of large numbers whose secret criminality has been, in a most impressive manner, divinely revealed. Indeed, so general is the application of this fact, that the sentiment is popularized in the adage, "Murder will out." Verily, there is nothing hid from the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; nor need He ever be at a loss for ways and means to bring to light the hidden works of darkness. Never let us forget that He it is who hath declared, "Be sure your sin will find you out!"

*Let us now listen to Achan's confession, and review it.*

"And Joshua said unto Achan, 'My son, give I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me!' And Achan answered Joshua, and said, 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus, and thus

have I done : When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them ; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it ! ” This confession was evidently made under the force of a strong conviction of the impossibility of deceiving that Omniscient Being whose hand he must have felt had been engaged in his unexpected arrest. Thief though he was, he told the truth ! for we read : “ So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold it was hid in the tent, and the silver under it. ” While, however, he told the truth, you cannot fail to observe the particular manner in which he frames his confession, evidently attempting to palliate his crime. Mark how he describes the garment : “ A *goodly* Babylonish garment ! ” One of those costly robes manufactured in Babylon, so valuable on account of their exquisitely elegant embroidery. He seems to say, “ It was *so beautiful* I could not refrain from taking it. ”

Then he enumerates the number of shekels of silver, and states the exact weight of the wedge of gold, as though he could not be justly blamed for being unable to resist so powerful a temptation. And does he not attempt to shuffle off the criminality of his conduct by charging it against his circumstances ? “ When I saw, ” he says, as though he would have Joshua understand that he considered himself the

victim of his good eyesight. What an unhappy mistake the Creator made in not having sent Achan into the world with sightless eyeballs in his head! Achan would seem desirous that Joshua should either take this view of the case, or else consider himself largely responsible for this unfortunate transaction in that he allowed Achan to go into the city where the spoil was to be seen, for how could it be supposed possible, by any reasonable person, that a man with such good organs of vision as Achan possessed, could go into the city and not see those articles, and seeing such articles, refrain from stealing them! Nothing is more common than for men to attempt the extenuation of their own misconduct, or that of others, by intimating that their position in life, or their constitutional bias, necessitated their action. Never was there a more specious and soul-destroying fallacy than this forged in hell! What powerful emphasis does Achan's sin give to the admonitory words of the great Lawgiver, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness!"

The history of Achan furnishes one of those impressive instances in which the righteous judgment of God against sin has been manifestly revealed in the immediate punishment of the offender.

True it is that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men," but Achan's punishment was one of those signal occasions in which Jehovah has come out of His holy habitation, and by the immediate visitation

of His vengeance on the persons and property of grossly wicked men, has forestalled the formal investigation and decisions of the final judgment.

“And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them into the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.” You will have observed no mention is made of the wife of this wretched man. She had probably been removed by death, prior to this calamitous period in their domestic history, and the poor woman had thus been spared this bitter experience. Do you ask, “Why punish the children?” I should not like to be a whit less charitable and humane than the most charitable and humane of my fellow-men, but I must admit that I cannot, without unjustifiably interfering with the inspired record of this matter, make it read any otherwise than that the children were punished and perished with the father. It is more than probable that they were his accomplices in the perpetration of this great crime. It is easy to believe that from tremblingly and blushing listening to his plausible rehearsal of the artful scheme for their family enrichment, they soon grew impatient to be



sharers in the ill-gotten wealth. They would help him prepare for its concealment, and when he stole forth to secure it, they would keep wary and anxious watch. Thus accessory to this great wrong, they became accursed of God, and perished by the hand of man.

Alas! what a sad perversion and abuse of parental influence on the part of Achan. Oh Achan! how different thy conduct from what it should have been. The law of thy God enjoined upon thee to "teach the commandments of the Lord diligently to thy children, and to talk of them when thou wast sitting in thy house," but thou hast both violated the law thyself, and induced thy sons and thy daughters to join thee in thy wickedness. Have we not reason to fear that there are many professedly religious parents in this day of laxity in family government, who are verily guilty before God of recreancy in respect of the duty they owe to their children. Affectionate, but sadly mistaken parents, who are extravagantly pandering to their children's natural or acquired passion for dress and display. How few are the instances in which parental influence is exerting the power it should in promoting the religious welfare of the family?

"Some men's sins are open beforehand," saith St. Paul, "going before to judgment." This will apply to all sensualists, whose creed is "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" and to the licentious and unclean of society. With all due deference to the refinement of the age, and the assumed sense of



modesty and propriety, characteristic of modern times, I believe in my heart, before God, that it is the solemn duty of the ministry of the day, to lift up its voice in thunder-toned condemnation and rebuke of the gross licentiousness, which I affirm upon the most reliable authority, defiles with its abominable impurities, all classes of society in both American and Canadian cities.

But St. Paul's statement applies not only to the vile victims of debauchery and uncleanness, upon whom the lightning of God's anger falls, wilting them down into their dishonored graves ere their sun has reached its meridian; it applies to others as well. I mean men who are making haste to be rich, men of thoughtful brow and hurried step, men whose straining soul as it peeps out of their anxious eyes, is ever plotting some tight bargain, or perilous enterprise for their still more rapid accumulation of wealth. Such men by life-exhausting thought and care by day, and sleepless hours by night invite disease, and thus expedite the approach of death. In such cases, what is death other than the righteous judgment of God taking legitimate effect upon the reckless violators of His holy and inexorable law. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth!" What, though because in every instance "judgment against an evil work be not executed speedily, the hearts of men be fully set within them to do wickedly!" What, though the forbearance of Jehovah serve only to

embolden such men in their crimes ! What, though with the infidels of ancient times they say, "Tush, how doth God know ?" or "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement !" yet let them know that God hath said, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them, though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down !" Strength and wisdom belong unto God ; "the deceived and the deceiver are his !" Though the man that contemns the Almighty may seemingly prosper ; "though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay ; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver," for "God shall cast upon him and not spare ;" and having stoned him to death with the inflictions of His wrath in this world, shall cast him into "everlasting burnings" in the world which is to come !" Well may we exclaim, in the language of Blair—

"O cursed lust of gold ! when for thy sake  
The wretch throws up his interest in both worlds,  
First hanged in this, then damned in that to come !"

Brethren ! there have been, there are now, and there still may be instances in which the Justice of God may be said to seize men and expose their guilt and wickedness in this life, but all such are to be regarded as so many assurances given to our faith that the divinely appointed day of general and final revelation will ultimately dawn upon the universe,—

“when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts;”  
when “every work shall be brought into judgment,  
with every secret thing whether it be good or evil,”—  
for Christ hath said, “There is nothing covered that  
shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be  
known!”

May you and I find mercy of the Lord in that day!  
Amen!

## THE DELUGE, AND ITS LESSONS.

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### SERMON XII.

“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark.”—GEN. vii. 1.

HOW much of sublimity attached to that period when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy over the birth of our new-made world! Earth was then the garden of the Lord, replete with beauty and mantled with perfection! Created in the image of Deity, man wore upon his brow the crown of God-given dominion over all the lower creatures. Then it was that Jehovah, contemplating the magnificence and harmony of His works, made His voice to reverberate amid distant spheres, pronouncing the whole and all its component parts to be “very good.”

How widely different the period to which our text introduces us! What a terrific scene is here described! We are startled with the rush and roar of the universal deluge; that terrible crisis when, having armed and marshalled the elements, sin-avenging

Heaven opened upon our guilty race the dreadful artillery of His wrath.

Four thousand years have come and gone since this scene of horrors was written among the chronicles of earth, but it is still eloquent in instruction for us. To some of the circumstances connected with this melancholy epoch, we ask your attention, furnishing, as they do, impressive illustration of great moral truths in which we have a deep and unavoidable interest.

Among these truths, the first we shall notice is—

THE RUIN TO WHICH SINNERS ARE EXPOSED.

*The conduct of the Antediluvians was such as provoked the Divine anger; so is that of sinners.*

Man being in honour, did not abide, but by an early act of disobedience, broke the law of his Maker, thereby cancelling the original bond of his own happiness, and blotting the handwriting of Deity in the volume of nature. From that act, as his starting point, he advanced in his career of sin and crime until the measure of his iniquity was full, and the long-slumbering wrath of Heaven burst in overwhelming judgment upon his unsheltered head. The small and gentle rivulet, increased by the waters of countless tributaries as it pursues its onward course, becomes swollen at length into a mighty flood, and rolls a deep, wide, and resistless river into the bosom of the vasty deep. The casual accumulation of noiseless and harmless snow-flakes upon the lofty mountain's brow, dislodged from

its capriciously chosen home by some trivial cause, enters upon its downward course, and, increasing in size, and weight, and speed, and force, as it continues to descend, only ceases to move when it has filled with desolation and death the peaceful vale below. Such was the certain and fearful progress of impiety in our world. Small in its beginning, it rapidly increased until it filled the whole earth.

That such was the moral condition of mankind prior to the deluge, is evident from the testimony of Moses in the only history we have of those early times. In the sixth chapter of this book, we read: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Such a state of things enkindled the righteous anger of the Lord, and He exclaimed: "My spirit shall not always strive with man." "The end of all flesh is come before me; behold I will destroy them with the earth!"

Sin, my brethren, is still that evil and bitter thing which God hateth and is determined to punish in the persons of all who continue, impenitently, to rebel against Him. It is too true that the men of to-day are both capable of, and inclined to all those sins and vices which involved the Antediluvians in ruin, and are thus exposing themselves to that wrath which is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.

*God forewarned the Antediluvians of His purpose to punish them; and so has He apprised sinners of a similar design respecting them.*

Amid the abounding iniquity of that age of depravity and rebellion, Noah alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and to him Jehovah revealed His purpose, saying: "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood. And behold I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy son's wives with thee."

The Apostle Peter styles Noah a Preacher of Righteousness, and no doubt for the space of one hundred and twenty years the venerable Patriarch lifted up his voice against the prevalent abominations of his race, and faithfully proclaimed the threatened wrath of God. By obedient conformity to the divine will he enforced the godly precepts of his lips before the eyes of the impious multitude, for "according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he:" and "Noah walked with God." Every time they saw and heard what Noah was doing during the time occupied in the building of the ark, they may be regarded as having had warning given to them of their approaching ruin.

Considering the large number who would be more or less intimately connected with this vast ship-building enterprise as contractors and mechanics, with their respective families, there would be few, if indeed any who would remain ignorant throughout this extended term of years of the history of this novel undertaking.

But the Spirit of God likewise strove with that ungodly people, and laboured to reclaim them. Leaving all their previous lives out of the question,—for the space of one hundred and twenty years God, in His patience and long-suffering, waited upon them; His almighty care was exercised over them; His love ministered to all their wants, and hourly manifested towards them uncounted kindnesses. Besides all this, the Divine Spirit, by gentle and gracious operation on their hearts and minds, sought to produce a proper sense of duty—true repentance for the past, and amendment for the future. Thus were those sons of wickedness admonished, instructed, and faithfully warned of their sin and danger.

Now, my brethren, in like manner has God apprised sinners of the present day of His purposes respecting them should they continue in sin.

What is the Bible, but a God-written protest against sin, and an illustrated declaration of approaching doom? Examine it closely, look at it on every side, and you will find the Old and New Testaments, Patriarchs and Priests, Prophets and Apostles, Sinai and Calvary, Moses and Christ, precept and promise, invi-



tation and threatening, benediction and anathema, mercy and judgment, heaven and hell,—all, with varied eloquence, denouncing sin, and forecasting the wrath which is to come. Is it not so plainly stated as to leave no room for reasonable cavil: "Upon the wicked God will rain fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest," even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, are set forth for an example? According to the word of God to Noah, the Antediluvian world was destroyed by water; so St. Peter declares, "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." As an old divine has said, "the cry of fire has been heard all through the Bible ages." The revelations of science suggest the facility with which this grandly-illuminated catastrophe might be effected. The fiery element is so universally present throughout the vast fabric of the material universe as to remind one of the words: "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." Like a vast army in ambush, slumbering under arms, it is ready to spring to action at any moment when the long-suffering Governor may see fit to utter the word. When that order is given, then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Again: By the teachings of the Christian ministry are the warnings of the Bible repeated and enforced; and, in a word, by all the institutions of our holy religion, her sacraments and her Sabbaths, her sanctuaries and her Sabbath schools, is Jehovah incessantly crying in the ears of our sinful race: "Prepare to meet thy God!" Then there are the thousands of God's people scattered up and down among the nations of the earth, by their virtuous lives and victorious deaths, illustrating the same God-fearing and God-honouring faith as that by which Noah was inspired, when, by lip and life, he admonished and condemned the world. Yes, my brethren, if the men of our times in Christian lands, in their eagerness to sin, rush madly upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler, it is not because they are not warned of the consequences, but it is because now, as of olden time, "Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

*The ruin of which God notified the Antediluvians, in due time, overtook them; so will that of sinners of modern times.*

Infidelity, no doubt, was rampant in the world in the days of Noah, lulling men into a fatal stupor, so that, in utter indifference to all that was said and done to arouse them, "they married and were given in marriage until the very day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."

In all probability the first beams of the ark were laid across each other amid the taunts and insults of the unbelieving crowd. They would likely remind the Patriarch of the unprecedented character of the predicted disaster, and believing him to have lost his head, would affect pity for his imbecility, and laugh outright at the monstrous absurdity of his wild fancy. Some would inquire where he expected the water to come from to float his ship. Others, assuming that his prophecy should come to pass, would object that his vessel would not be sufficient to accommodate and save all he proposed to take into it; or even if it were, that it would be impossible to gather all the living creatures within its walls. Others, again, would condemn the whole thing as utterly inconsistent, and, therefore, improbable. They would say, think you a righteous and benevolent God would ever destroy so many infants and innocent children? Such a transaction would be the grossest outrage imaginable!

So, in the present day, in the moral insanity which comes of unbelief, scoffers walking after their own lusts, impiously ask: "Where is the promise of his coming?" Men live and laugh, and sin and sing, as though the whole of Revelation were a myth, and the living Christianity of the age a gigantic swindle. But in the end, the vision will speak and will not lie. Men may brand their souls, material; inscribe upon their coffins, "Death, an eternal sleep," and pro-

nounce the Bible a monstrous lie; but the day of the Lord hastens when, amid its terrible realizations, they shall have wrested from their reluctant lips the awfully enforced truth: "Thou art a God of truth. Just and right art thou!"

Another truth illustrated by the history of the deluge, is the following, viz:—

THE SALVATION WHICH GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR SINNERS, AND THEIR DUTY IN REFERENCE TO IT.

*God provided an ark for the preservation of Noah and his family; so He has provided a Saviour for sinners.*

The ark was a divine conception, and specific instructions were furnished to Noah by Jehovah for its construction. Judged by the efficient manner in which it accomplished the purpose for which it was built, it proved itself worthy of its divine authorship. By its means Noah and his household experienced salvation from temporal ruin. My brethren, the salvation of sinful men from spiritual and eternal ruin is likewise from the Lord. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This salvation is in Christ, and there is salvation in none other. "Him hath God set forth as a propitiation for sin;" and in the divine appointment of this Saviour we have the strongest assurance of His sufficiency. His willingness and ability to save even to the uttermost have already been illus-

trated upon a magnificent scale, as thousands upon earth, and millions in heaven are ready to testify. In Him is an infinite capacity to save, "for it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." To all in this assembly yet out of the ark of safety, we would confidently and affectionately extend the pressing invitation of grace—

"Come, Oh my guilty brethren, come,  
Groaning beneath your load of sin,  
His bleeding heart shall make you room :  
His open side shall take you in :  
He calls you now, invites you home :  
Come, Oh my guilty brethren, come !"

"And God said unto Noah, *Come thou into the ark !*"  
*God required Noah to enter the ark in order that he might be saved ; and so He requires sinners to receive Christ as their Saviour, if they would be delivered from the wrath which is to come.*

All in vain had it been that God had devised the ark, and that it had been faithfully built in accordance with the divine directions, unless the Patriarch had entered within its guardian walls and remained there, he most assuredly must have perished. No coercive means were adopted to compel his compliance with the will of God in this respect. He might have foolishly, madly refused to do so, and been lost. He accepted the provision and was saved. So, my brethren, all the costly arrangements of divine wisdom and love for the salvation of

men from sin and wrath will be unavailing, so far as sinners individually are concerned, unless they comply with the gracious requirements of the Gospel, and flee for refuge to Christ, and hide themselves in His all-atoning merits, in the exercise of an earnest, penitential, and obedient faith. Christ presents Himself to us as the salvation of God, and declares if we do not believe in Him as thus provided for us, we "shall die in our sins," and where He is we shall not be permitted to come.

Oh my wretched fellow sinner, who, deep-wounded by the Spirit's sword,

"Art trembling lest the wrath divine,  
Which bruises now thy guilty soul,  
Shall bruise that guilty soul of thine  
Long as eternal ages roll!"

Is the language of thy terror-stricken soul, "what must I do to be saved?" Then turn the face of thy soul Christ-ward, and in the spirit of a humble hope, cry unto Him—

"Jesus, lover of my soul!  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high:  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last!"

"And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou, *and all thy house* into the ark!"

*Thus God required Noah to interest himself in the welfare of his family, and so He requires all those who are themselves saved, to seek the salvation of others.*

In the sacred relations of husband and father, which he filled, he was charged by Jehovah with grave responsibility for the safety of those, who, as wife and children, had been committed to his direction and care. Cheerfully doing the will of God himself, he was expected to use his influence to induce his relatives to do the same. His godly counsels, and earnest prayers for their good would be rendered more certain of success by reason of the unvarying religious consistency of his every day life, for "he walked with God." How could they withhold their respect and obedience from one who was so uniformly sincere, unselfish and kind? In entering the ark, Noah therefore had the happiness of being accompanied by every member of his household. My brethren, apart from the fact that He who hath set the solitary of mankind in families, hath enjoined upon all who have partaken of His salvation, that they seek to do good, and communicate of the heavenly benefit to others, it is of the very nature of genuine religion itself to prompt its possessor to acts of mercy and love. Such an one can understand what led Wesley to sing—

"O for a trumpet voice,  
On all the world to call;  
To bid their hearts rejoice,  
In Him who died for all!"

As subjects of salvation, parents will be anxious for the conversion of their children, and children for that of their parents. Would to God that the potent force of natural affection were more generally thus sanctified, and enlisted in the service of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost! Too frequently, alas, the salutary effects produced by ministerial effort on the Sabbath day are all undone, and destroyed by the cold indifference in reference to their spiritual condition with which the unconverted are treated on Monday morning by those members of their families who profess to have found the Saviour. To such unfaithful disciples of Jesus, how rebukeful are His words, "he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad?" God grant that all of us who are wont to congratulate ourselves on our having found our way into the ark, may evince for the future a more intelligent and greatly deepened interest in the salvation of our unsaved kindred, neighbours and friends! With our own faces set Zionward, let us say to them, "come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord God hath spoken good concerning Israel!"

There is one truth more, as illustrated by the history of the deluge, which we shall notice ere we close, viz :—

THE CONFUSION AND MISERY OF THE LOST IN CONTRAST WITH THE PEACE AND JOY OF THE SAVED.

The one hundred and twenty years of special mercy towards the degenerate race at length came to an end,



and the eventful day of doom dawned upon the world. Up to this time, nothing in the accustomed face of nature gave any portent of the realization of Noah's prophecy: but now, phenomena of the most startling character occur. The fountains of the great deep are broken up, and the windows of heaven are opened. In the self-same day entered Noah and his family into the ark, "and the Lord shut him in." It is left to our imagination to conceive the scenes of horror that then rapidly ensued. Very shortly after the long-respected barriers of the enraged ocean had yielded to the irresistible pressure of the waves, and the lower lands were rapidly being submerged, the bewildering conviction that, after all their arguments to the contrary, the words of the unheeded and hated Patriarch were being fulfilled would fasten itself upon the excited minds of the most reprobate and unbelieving. Flocking from all quarters to the locality of the ark, soon a terror-stricken multitude would surround the majestic structure, and in tones of terrible earnestness, and with dismay written on every face, would make their various appeals to Noah. In a thousand different ways would they apologize for, and seek to extenuate the treatment they had given to the faithful servant of God; and, asking his forgiveness, would plead in tones of anguish that they might be admitted into the ark. But it is all in vain; the day of grace had passed; God had shut Noah in the ark: and by that significant though simple act, had—with the ex-

ception of the Patriarch's family—shut out all the world beside.

God had shut the door, and Noah durst not open it, even if he desired to do so. And now, what wailing and weeping; what piercing cries for help; what arduous struggles and unavailing efforts to escape from the continually increasing and widely prevailing waters! How madly, and with what a melancholy eloquence do criminations and recriminations leap from tongue to tongue! Children chiding and cursing their parents for the ill advice, and worse example they had given to them. Relatives and neighbours mutually upbraiding one another for the influence they had exerted for evil in the community. But the waters increase! the tempest grows wilder, and yet wilder still, while the horridly dreary gloom is lightened only by the flaming bolts which, in rapid succession, are shot from pole to pole, accompanied by the uninterrupted roaring of the thunder, joined with that of the infuriated sea as it rushed in its madness over highland and mountain, until "all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered!" God's ear alone heard the last cry of the last "strong swimmer in his agony;" and His eye alone witnessed the sinking of the last sinner as he went down to join his coteremporaries in the experiences of a common punishment, as they had been associated in a common rebellion.

My brethren, these scenes of horror which have

been reflected upon our minds from the surging waters of the ancient deluge, but faintly foreshadow the events which shall signalize the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them which know not God." "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him!" Then shall there be a great earthquake, and the sun become black as sackcloth, and the moon become as blood, and the stars shall fall unto the earth as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places. Then shall all those who have failed to make their salvation sure, appeal to the mountains and rocks, saying, "fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

But there is no escape for them. The dead, small and great must stand before God in judgment, and all whose names shall not be found written in the Lamb's book of life, shall be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. Oh there will be partings in that day between parents and children, husbands and wives, companions and

friends! There will be upbraidings and recriminations there also! It is all useless now; and driven away in their unwashed wickedness, they shall go into everlasting punishment, to bewail through the revolving cycles of eternity, the insanity of their sin.

"Away out in one of the Western States, there is a lunatic asylum in which there is a man who is ever walking to and fro, wringing his hands, and with an inimitable expressiveness, exclaiming, "Oh, if I only had!" Some years ago that man was an employè on the railway, and was stationed at a certain draw-bridge on the line. One day he had received special orders, on no account to raise the bridge until he had further notice given to him. It happened, however, that the captain of a schooner, who was extremely anxious to pass up the river, strongly urged him to allow him to do so; he yielded at length to his persuasions. The bridge was lifted, the vessel had passed through, and the man was in the very act of readjusting the bridge, when his ear caught the sound of an approaching train; startled, he looked in that direction, and to his horror saw an express train coming on with lightning speed, and had but time to stand back, when with thundering sound it dashed by him, and plunged into the terrible vortex, to which his disobedience to orders had opened the way. That moment, reason fled that man's soul, and ever since, with hair whitened and hands twisted with agony, he paces up and down, ceaselessly uttering the unavailing regret, "*Oh! if I only had!*"

So my brethren may it not be that along the corridors of the lurid prison of hell, many an unhappy wretch, frenzied with his quickened conscience of sins, is ceaselessly recalling and lamenting the sins of his youth, or the transgressions of his riper age, and remembering the earnest calls to repentance which he refused to obey, vainly exclaims in tones such as the agony of hell alone could evoke—"OH! IF I ONLY HAD!" God in His mercy save you and me from such a fate!

For one moment, now consider—

*The peace and joy of the Saved.*

The waters of the deluge, prevailing over the highest mountains of the earth, were rolled like a huge winding sheet around the unnumbered victims of their merciless power. Sublimely poised upon the foam-crested billows rode the ark, filled with the germinant life of a new world yet to be. Protected by the shielding of almighty care, Noah and his household are exempted from all fear, and kept in perfect peace and safety. At length the waters, at God's bidding, subside, and soon the ark rests unharmed upon the summit of Ararat. Then the door of this stronghold of salvation is opened, and thence come forth the grateful company of the saved of the Lord, who, with smoking sacrifices and holy songs offer up their praises and thanksgivings to the God of their salvation. So, my brethren, the redeemed of the Lord, dwelling by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the true ark of salva-

tion, are safe amid the swellings of Jordan and the rocking of the universe in the day of judgment; and through eternal ages shall unitedly stand upon Mount Zion and chant the glorious song of redemption, to the glory of God and the Lamb!

“ May you and I bear some humble part  
In that immortal song :  
Wonder and joy shall tune our heart,  
And love command our tongue.”

Amen !

## THE LOSS OF THE SOUL.

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### SERMON XIII.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—ST. MATTHEW xvi. 26.

**M**AN is a being of insatiable inquisitiveness! In many persons this disposition develops itself in a morbid craving for that which is new and marvellous. The population of Athens, at the time of St. Paul's visit to that famous emporium of human wisdom and inquiry, were of this class, seeing, says the sacred historian, "they spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." To such misgovernment of this mental appetite we are indebted for those troublesome appendages of society whom the word of God designates "busy bodies in other men's matters," and who are incessantly on the scout to obtain something to titillate their news-mongering propensity. Considering the extensive transactions of this vast exchange, you will not deem me uncharitable when I say, that much

which changes hands under such circumstances is equally false and pernicious. When, however, this spirit of inquiry is judiciously exercised in the wide and legitimate realms of art, science and religion, it is largely subservient of the highest interests of humanity. In the roll of the ages, great questions in each of these departments of thought and feeling have passed through the inquisitorial chambers of the mightiest intellects of our race. But what I want to say is this: Of all the problems ever submitted to the human mind for investigation and solution, there have been none to compare, in point of interest and importance, with those propounded to us by the Saviour in the language of our text. For nearly nineteen centuries have these grave questions been demanding an answer from mankind, but to-night they are as unanswered and unanswerable as when first they rolled forth from the eloquent lips of Incarnate Wisdom. As they have come travelling down the corridors of time, reiterating their solemn appeal, each exploding age has in its successive turn echoed back: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Unanswered and unanswerable, did I say? Yes, and unanswered they must be until that period shall arrive which shall record the last Alleluia in heaven, and the final wail in hell; but, as the flames of the pit shall never be quenched, and the worm of its penal torment shall



never die; and as the glorified saints shall wave before the throne in heaven a palm which shall never wither, wear a crown which shall never dim, and sing a song which shall never end, so these questions must remain unanswered forever. Now, my dear friends, let us withdraw our thoughts from every other consideration, and, as it were, shut ourselves up to the study of these momentous problems. They are of equal interest for every man, woman and child in this sanctuary.

In discussing these questions, we shall endeavour to establish and illustrate certain propositions into which they may be naturally resolved.

Our first proposition is this:—

THAT A MAN MAY LOSE HIS OWN SOUL.

There is an awful possibility that the soul may be lost. We make this statement on the authority of Him who spake "with authority," and "in whose mouth was found no guile," *i. e.*, "no deceit—no cunningly devised fable." He did not stop to prove that every man had a soul. He took it for granted that His hearers had too much good sense to question that point. He speaks in the text of a man "losing his own soul," and you must bear in mind that all His utterances consisted with eternal wisdom and immutable truth. Too just and deep was the sense He entertained of the solemn business of dealing with man's immortal interests to permit Him ever to seek to enliven His discourses and amuse His hearers by

introducing a sort of pyrotechnic display, consisting in the burning of a few harmless theological squibs! Of Him it was emphatically true, He always said what He meant, and meant what He said. It may be that many of you may have grown familiar with the phraseology of the text, and of the Bible generally, upon the subject of man's liability to fail of being saved, and consequently to be lost forever. You need not be told that familiarity with the truths and doctrines of the Bible does not, by any means, necessarily imply an intelligent conviction of their reality, and practical recognition of them in our actual lives. Are there not those present concerning whose familiarity with the doctrine of our text we may well tremble? The thought carries you back to the home-teachings of childhood, or your school-going days, when, with irreverent hands, you were wont to turn the sacred page. From that early period even until now, you have been accustomed to peruse the inspired volume, and to hear the exposition of its solemn verities from the lips of men of God, so that you have become indifferent to the flames of divine anger against sin which flash in the threatenings of the Word of God, and your ear has become used to the clanking of the chains, and the muffled groanings of the wailing "spirits in prison." We would have you consider, that although you may have become so much at home with these awful truths as to sport in all the abandonment of unlimited voluptuousness upon the

fiery verge of perdition, your hardihood does neither destroy the fact nor lessen your imminent danger. Your composure and ill-timed self-complacency, will in no wise avail to disarm the violated law of its terrors, or allay the fierceness of sin-avenging justice. Have you ever pondered seriously the import of this expression : "Lose his own soul?"

Let us inquire in the first place—

*What is the nature of this loss?*

I do not pretend to know what it is to lose the soul, and my earnest prayer to God is that you and I may never know, by personal experience, what it is to lose the soul. We are not left, however, without materials to assist us in forming some remote conception of the nature of this dire calamity. We are warranted in believing that by the loss of the soul is meant, *exclusion from heaven*. This includes the forfeiture of all that vast heritage of good which God has designed for redeemed man, and designated in the Scriptures "eternal life." What a forfeiture is this ! It is to forego "the peace which passeth understanding;" "the joy which is unspeakable and full of glory," and "the hope which maketh not ashamed," protection, guidance and all needful supply in life, support and consolation in suffering and sorrow, complete victory over death and the grave, to be followed by the endless enjoyment of the immeasured blessedness and glory of heaven. All this is lost by the man who loses his soul. Such a man lives in his sins,

dies in his sins, and where Christ is he can never come. To all such the mandate of a righteous God shall be: "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you!"

This loss still further consists in *punishment in hell*. "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God." "Fear not them," saith Christ, "who, when they have killed the body, have done all that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Thus the entire man is to be subjected to penal suffering. That suffering will arise from the adaptation of the instrument of punishment to the subject. The body is to be punished, and, though the resurrection shall have effected a change in its nature, it will still be a material body and demand material punishment. Does some one ask: "Do you believe that punishment will arise from the action of material fire?" To him I reply: The Bible, which is our sole informant on this subject, says it will, and I know of no reason to doubt or question its positive testimony. The body, rendered by the resurrection indestructible, shall be eternally tortured by the quenchless flames. Does not the Bible teach this? If not, then the fire spoken of can be only the symbol of the suffering of the finally lost, of which, as something infinitely worse, subjection to everlasting burnings furnishes but an imperfect type.

Which will the objector prefer? Unquestionably the soul is to be punished. How? I have often remarked that God does not unmake a man, constitutionally considered, in order to save him and fit him to dwell in heaven, so I would now confidently declare, neither does He do so in order to damn him. As their bodies shall be cast into hell possessed eternal susceptibility of pain, so their souls invested with all those intellectual powers and moral faculties by which they were distinguished in time, shall, by this very fact itself, be capable of punishment adapted to their peculiar nature. The power to enjoy necessarily involves the capacity to suffer. Those vigorous powers of thought by which they prosecuted their profound researches amid the arcana of nature, either in the bowels of the earth, and the vasty ocean's depths, or soaring aloft and revelling at will in the sublime regions of celestial wonders, those powers, instead of being impaired, shall be invigorated by the change, and, as they pore over the purposes and government of God; and conscience, taking the side of Heaven, shall upbraid and condemn them; will they not curse their power to think? Then there will be memory, that weird faculty of the soul, eternally revisiting this earth, the scene of their mercies and their sins; retravelling life's eventful journey, bringing back to the eye the sights, and to the ear the sounds of by-gone days. They shall remember their Sabbaths and their sermons, a father's counsel, a

mother's prayers and a sister's tears, and, oh! were there no other instrument of torture than this, it were an intolerable hell to experience the ceaseless rankling in their deathless vitals of that barbed arrow which faithful memory shall fasten there. How will they hurl their powerless anathemas at memory, and gnash their teeth in desperation, because of their inability either to drown her voice, or destroy her condemnatory records! Then think of the satanic pride, and envy, and jealousy, and murderous malice, and blood-thirsty revenge, which, burning with ever intensifying heat and fury, shall torment their wretched victims forever and ever!

Endeavour to grasp these two ideas, so imperfectly sketched in these remarks, viz: Exclusion from heaven, and Punishment in hell, and you may form some faint imagining of what it is for a man to "lose his soul."

Having noticed the *nature* of the soul's loss, we shall, in the next place, proceed to inquire—

*How may the Soul be lost?*

Prudence, at least, suggests such an inquiry as this, since "to be forewarned is to be forearmed." In some instances—

*This woful evil results from the adoption of infidel opinions and sceptical notions respecting the great truths of Divine Revelation.*

The present age is rife with infidelity, both open and disguised. He who, of old, "gave the lie

direct" to Almighty God by saying to the unsuspecting woman "*thou shalt not surely die!*" has concocted many subtle schemes to effect the ruin of souls. Under what a variety of forms does his lying spirit develop itself in the world around us! How numerous are the brands of infidel error! Nothing so benumbs the moral senses and stupefies the soul as these infernal opiates! Let the spirit of scepticism enter a man's soul, and at once all the avenues of approach to that man's spiritual nature are powerfully blockaded against the agencies of saving mercy. The only sufficient motives to virtue and restraints from vice, are removed, and the soul left entirely to the merciless control of the devil. We sometimes search the records of distant periods of time for illustrations of the truths we preach, but we shall not do so in this instance. Permit me to relate an event which occurred in our own Dominion only a few years since, and which is all, I presume, that will be deemed necessary to elucidate and enforce our remarks on this part of our subject.

In the city of Hamilton, Ontario, a promising young man, the son of a leading and very wealthy citizen, retired to his bedroom at the solemn midnight hour, and then and there deliberately shot himself dead! He left behind him a letter addressed to his father, which concluded with curses and imprecations, and which contained the following significant sentence: "You told me there is no hell; your argu-



ments have convinced me, and I do not fear the consequences."

Oh my dear friends! especially you young men! beware of every species of infidelity, particularly Universalism. Remember the word of God declares: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

In other instances—

*The Soul may be lost by means of intemperance and various sensuality.*

We specify intemperance because of its prominence among the vices of the age, and particularly on account of its peculiarly disastrous effect upon the general constitution of man. Such is the baleful influence exerted by this vice over the mental and moral nature of its victim, that apart from such a sovereign interposition of Divine mercy and power as we are not warranted to expect, it would seem to be a moral impossibility for a confirmed drunkard, as such, to be reached and saved by the appliances of the Gospel. This wide-spread and terrible evil destroys the entire man. It enervates the intellect, debauches the conscience, shackles the will, deadens the affections, and feeds and stimulates all the unhallowed lusts and passions which sin has engendered in the human soul, and leads its slaves through every slough of sensuality to final and utter ruin. Unless rescued by the mighty power of divine grace, the wretched inebriate must descend by rapid, staggering strides, to the gloom of



a dishonoured grave and the shades of eternal woe,—for “no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God!”

To young and old we would address the words of divine counsel: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder!”

There is danger of the soul being lost by

*Entertaining false views of the nature and obligations of religion.*

The opinions held by some persons as to what constitutes a Christian are exceedingly unscriptural and erroneous. Some deem themselves Christians because they are members of a church whose theology they consider to be orthodox, and whose constitution and discipline they believe to be scriptural. Others, not so mindful about questions of doctrine and discipline, are simply trusting to their *connection* with the church for salvation. Many, we fear, have lost their souls through sheer sectarian confidence, pride, and bigotry. “Say not,” then, “we have Abraham to our Father!” Others are hoping for eternal life upon the ground of their observance of the sacraments of the Christian faith, and outward conformity to the letter of Christian duty. Oh that they may be aroused from this self-satisfying dream of human pride ere it be too late to obtain salvation by grace, through faith! To all these we would say, there is no such thing as deno-

minational, doctrinal, sacramental, or self-wrought salvation! Christ hath said, "Ye must be born again!"

Others there are who are waiting at the pool of religious ordinances, making no effort to secure their salvation, vainly waiting for what they call "*God's good time*," or "the day of His power." To any whose moral energies are paralyzed by such unscriptural ideas of their responsibility, we would say, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: call upon him while he is near!" "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation!" Refuse to do so, and you may have but a very little longer to wait, in order to discover—but too late for correction—your soul-destroying error.

The soul may be lost through

*The love of money.*

From the many illustrations of the destructive character of this base passion furnished in the Bible, we will select the case of Judas. This man was as much chosen to eternal life as Peter, James, or John. "I have chosen you twelve," said Christ, "but one of you is a devil!" What made Judas a "devil?" Why, Satan entered into him in the shape of a money-loving spirit. He was the purser or treasurer of the Apostolic company. May we not trace a connection between the jingle of the cash he was accustomed to handle and the wail of his bankrupt soul in the realm

of horrors? This avarice of money was the sin of his circumstances, which at length became so imperious as to render him deaf and dead to all the pleadings of virtue and friendship, the rebukes of conscience, and the monitions of the Holy Ghost. In this state of mind he encompassed the hideous plot of betraying Christ into the hands of his enemies for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, amounting to about four pounds ten shillings, sterling. The foul deed is done! He has the money! The price of blood is in his hand; and what now? Is he satisfied? There he goes! Behold that haggard wretch! See how the shadows of hell are blackening his countenance! The demon of Remorse is driving him forth; and whither does he go? He goes to hang himself! And hang himself he did! And Judas went "to his own place." As the shriek of his self-murdered spirit seems to reach your ear, are you not compelled to exclaim—

"Oh cursèd lust of Gold!"

The soul may be lost through  
*Indecision.*

A firm determination to serve God is the first step in religion. The entire work of salvation follows this decisive step; but never can precede it. Many, we fear, are forever lost because they never fully made up their minds to be saved. Almost persuaded to seek the salvation of our souls, is tantamount to being fully decided that they shall be lost.

"Almost persuaded" now to believe;  
"Almost persuaded" Christ to receive,  
Seems now some soul to say,  
"Go, Spirit, go thy way,  
Some more convenient day  
On thee I'll call!"

"Almost persuaded" harvest is past!  
"Almost persuaded" doom comes at last!  
"Almost" cannot avail;  
"Almost" is but to fail!  
Sad, sad, that bitter wail—  
"Almost"—BUT LOST.

Does any one ask—

*On whom does the responsibility of this Loss rest?*

To this question our text replies in the simple expression "lose his own soul." Does not this teach that it is the man's own work? The entire showing of Scripture is in harmony with this teaching. If a man is destroyed, he is self-destroyed; if he be finally lost, it will be solely because he would not be saved. To every one who shall have been favoured with the call of the Gospel, who shall fail of preparation for heaven, the righteous Judge, in the day of final audit, after making all due allowance for unfaithful ministers, ungodly parents, bad examples, and small opportunities, shall say: "I called, but ye *refused*. Ye would none of my counsel! Therefore, I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh! I would have gathered you but ye would not!"

Our second proposition is this, viz :—

NO AMOUNT OF TEMPORAL GAIN CAN PAY A MAN FOR THE LOSS OF HIS SOUL.

“For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.”

What such a man would acquire would not be adapted to the necessities and capacities of his spiritual and immortal nature. What are we to understand by “gaining the whole world,” if it be not the acquisition of the highest honours, sweetest pleasures, and richest wealth earth could possibly afford. Suppose that a man had actually possessed himself of this various stock, (which I need scarcely say is a supposition that never can be realized,) Is he happy, I may ask? If that which is earthly can satisfy that which is spiritual; if that which is finite can fully meet a demand for the infinite; if time can fill that which is adapted to eternity; if so, then we answer, Yes! he is happy. Think of Solomon, the disappointed pleasure-taker, philosopher, millionaire, and monarch, and remember his mournful yet truthful verdict: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit!”

Again: What such a man would acquire, he would, sooner or later, be compelled to relinquish. “There is no man living who shall not see death.” This stern and inexorable Death, with his icy hands, will violate all the man’s title deeds, transfer his honours to others, and carry him away from all the delights

of earth. What saith the Holy Ghost? "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him." "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

Our third and last proposition is this, viz:—

IF THE SOUL BE ONCE LOST, IT IS LOST FOR EVER.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

We cannot reasonably suppose the Saviour here refers merely to temporal life; and yet there are those who preposterously say, He speaks of nothing else. So to interpret these words would be to divest them of all intelligent meaning and point. Do such persons forget that not infrequently, in the course of history, has that life which had been forfeited by crime or misdemeanor been redeemed by the payment of such a ransom as was deemed sufficient by the State; while in some instances one brother or friend has laid down his life for another? By the use of this interrogatory style, the Saviour evidently designed to convey the idea that, although in an earthly court the life of the offender might be redeemed, yet in the grand court of the universe no such commutation should be allowed, but that the loss of the soul would be (to use a strictly legal phrase) "irrepleviabie." "Then a great ransom shall not deliver him." Look at the context—"For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he

shall reward every man according to his works." "All souls were forfeit once," but were also provisionally redeemed.

"The Ransom was paid down; the fund of heaven,  
Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,  
Amazing and amazed, poured forth the price,  
All price beyond:"

That priceless ransom was the *precious* blood of Christ. The man who has lost his soul has counted the blood of the Redeemer an unholy thing. By the neglect of his soul's salvation he has treated the atonement with contempt. And what remains? "There remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of wrath, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary." Nothing in the wide universe would be of sufficient value to redeem such a soul. Do you ask, Why? My answer is, That soul represents an untold expenditure of divine wealth. I do not refer to the constitution and character of the human soul. As an exquisite and wondrous piece of divine mechanism it deservedly occupies a prominent place in the vast gallery of divine creations. But it is not of the soul under this aspect that we now speak. We would have you ponder the great interests which Almighty God has vested in that deathless structure. For that soul He sent His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to suffering, shame, and death; and do you suppose that the righteous Father would admit into heaven one

who persisted in crucifying that Son afresh, and putting him to an open shame? Or, do you suppose He would accept as a compensation for such an aggravated insult cast upon His love, any thing which could be found within the range of created things? Do you not hear St. Paul, than whom no man ever possessed a more noble and generous heart, saying, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." And do you not hear the vast assemblage of angels and men surrounding the flaming tribunal of the sovereign Judge lifting up their voices and sounding forth his doom? What do they say? Harken! "Let him be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!" And then the wretched being shall be shut up in the prison of hell, whence he shall never be delivered. "Verily I say unto you, it were better for that man that he had never been born!"

In conclusion: Do I address those who are endeavouring to work out their own salvation by the aid of His grace who worketh in them to will and to do? To you I would say, "Keep thy soul with all diligence." Prayerfully watch against all those influences which you know to be prejudicial to your spiritual safety. Be earnest also and devoted in your efforts to save the souls of the many by whom you are surrounded, who are travelling down to endless ruin. Remember—"He that winneth souls is wise," and



know that "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Have the unconverted been my hearers? What can I say to excite you to becoming concern for the salvation of your souls? May I not believe that you are convinced of the reasonableness and truth of what has been advanced upon the subject of your danger? Let me urge you to repent of all your sins and follies at once, while God, in great forbearance, waits to be gracious, saying: "Return unto me and I will return unto you!" If any man say "I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." May you and I henceforth live under the influence of the sentiment —

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,  
But how I may escape the death  
Which never, never dies!"

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul: and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Amen.

## THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM ENCOURAGED.

### SERMON XIV.

"And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."—**Exodus xxxiii. 14.**

**T**HE history of the Israelites from the time of their departure from Egypt until their settlement in the Land of Promise, is highly interesting and instructive. That portion of it with which our text is connected, affords important lessons. It teaches us the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart, God's hatred of sin, the certainty of its punishment, the efficacy of faithful and persevering prayer, and, above all, the condescension, long-suffering, and mercy of Jehovah. Under the leadership of Moses, the children of Israel had advanced on their journey as far as Mount Horeb. On this mountain the Lord graciously communed with Moses, giving him instructions for the future guidance and government of the people. It happened, however, that while Moses was thus engaged, the people became impatient, and imperatively demanded of Aaron that he should make gods which should lead them forth instead of Moses. Sinfully complying with this un-

holy request, Aaron made a golden calf, unto which, in the madness of their folly, the people rendered idolatrous worship. Righteously provoked by such impiety, Jehovah threatened to exterminate them. Moses at once became their intercessor. The Lord hearkened to his pleadings and abated the severity of His judgment, so that instead of their total extinction, only three thousand of the people pay the penalty of their transgression with the sacrifice of their lives. As a farther token of His displeasure, the Lord declared that for the remainder of the journey he would send his angel before them, but He Himself would not go up any more in the midst of them, as He had previously done. When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned. Again Moses became their advocate, and once more his generous faith is divinely honoured. Our text is the answer he received : "And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Thus were the people assured that the Divine presence should still accompany them through their journey, and bring them to the promised rest. Believing that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope," we consider the words of our text as applicable to the people of God at the present time, and shall take occasion from them and the history of which they form a part, to consider and illustrate—

FIRST: THE CHARACTER OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE CAREER IN WHICH THEY ARE ENGAGED.

The circumstances of this people at this period in their history, may serve to illustrate the character and career of the New Testament Church, inasmuch as

*They had been redeemed from bondage and made a distinct people.*

By divine interposition their delivery from the vassalage of Egypt had been signally accomplished. The haughty and obdurate Pharaoh, partially humbled by a series of stupendous and miraculous judgments, had reluctantly permitted them to escape from his tyrannic yoke. They had now assumed the form of a distinct nation—had received special laws from heaven, and were under the particular government of the Most High. In these respects there is a striking analogy between them and the present people of God. All who sustain this character have been delivered from spiritual bondage, and called out of the ungodly world. Once they were the blind dupes and slaves of the devil. Laden with the corruptions of their nature, and fettered with the chains of evil habits, they were the sport of the spiritual tyrant who ruthlessly triumphed over them. Now, all this is changed. They accepted Christ as their Saviour, and He hath made them free. How glorious the emancipation they have experienced! Now, they are the Lord's freemen, and rejoice in the glorious liberty of the children of God, having "re-

ceived not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father." Sin now no longer has dominion over them. "Being made free from sin and become the servants of God they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life."

As ancient Israel stood in visible and public distinction from the nations of the earth, a peculiar treasure unto God, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, so Christ's spiritual Israel are described as being "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

All who have experienced this mighty work of spiritual redemption have avouched the Lord to be their God, and are living avowedly and practically under the influence of principles as different from those which govern the unregenerate as light is from darkness,—as life is from death. In their habits of thought, in their rules of action, in the objects of their pursuit, and in the sources of their pleasures, this grand distinction will be preserved and evinced.

The history of ancient Israel still further applies to the spiritual church of God, inasmuch as

*They were travelling to the Land of Promise.*

On this journey, though strange and beset with many dangers and trials, they were called to proceed without delay. How highly emblematical of the career of God's people, progressing through time,

animated by the hopes of immortality! Hence, the Apostle declares, "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." To the true believer, his stay in this world is a time of sojourning—emphatically, a pilgrimage. He was redeemed from the thralldom and degradation of his natural depravity that he might commence it. Obedient to divine instruction, he is going forth daily as a man travelling through a foreign country, continually aspiring after the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus have the faithful ever lived, and thus must they still live until time shall be no more, and the entire company of the Lord's redeemed shall return to Zion with songs, there to be crowned with everlasting joy and "life for evermore."

Secondly: OUR TEXT ILLUSTRATES THE DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"My presence shall go with thee." This relates to their *present* condition.

The Lord will be with His people to *direct them*. It was the exalted privilege of ancient Israel to be favoured with visible symbols of the Divine presence. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, to go by day and night." We must not forget that the Divine presence is the peculiar portion of God's people in every age. The same gracious Being who guided the elder church through the wilderness still assures all who love Him

of His companionship and guidance. By His Spirit, Word, and providence, He will conduct them in the way wherein they should go, and bring them at length to the city of habitation.

Again : His presence will be with them to  
*Provide for them.*

The land through which Israel journeyed was a sterile waste, described as "a land not sown." Yet, in this vast howling wilderness how beautifully were all their wants supplied by their wonder-working God ! When the people asked, He brought forth quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. "When they were athirst He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ; they ran in the dry places like a river."

How strikingly illustrative is all this of the world's wide wilderness, through which God leads His people now, and the kind and ample provision He makes for all their spiritual necessities ? The appetites of their souls clamor for a nourishment which no created good can yield ; but from the hand of God they receive both the bread and the water of life. He satisfies them abundantly with His goodness. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

"All needful grace will God bestow,  
And crown that grace with glory too ;  
He gives us all things, and withholds  
No real good from upright souls."

The Lord will be with His people to  
*Defend them.*

Many were the dangers to which Israel were exposed in that great and terrible wilderness. Besides the fiery flying serpents, and the scorpions with which they were assailed, they were frequently annoyed by the menaces and attacks of the surrounding inhabitants. Amid these perils, "the Lord of hosts was with them, the God of Jacob was their refuge." Many times did he deliver them from their foes, "saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy," that he might make his mighty power to be known.

In these particulars how marked is the analogy between their condition and that of the new covenant church. Had they dangers to pass through? So have we. Had they enemies to encounter? So have we. This world to the Christian is a continual scene of conflict and danger. But as Israel had a faithful protector and all-sufficient deliverer in Jehovah, so have we. Christ is the captain of our salvation, "and if he be for us, who can be against us?" "The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and preserveth them!"

The Lord will be with His people to  
*Abide with them.*

For the space of forty years did Jehovah direct, supply, and defend His ancient people, until He



brought them into the land which He had promised unto their fathers. "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," He still encouragingly assures His church of to-day. At all times, and under all the vicissitudes of their mortal life, in youth, and in old age, in prosperity and adversity, He saith, "I will never leave thee, I will never, no, never forsake thee." Earthly friendships may be interrupted or withdrawn, human care and support may fail, but with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting wisdom and strength, and "he is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Oh believer, well may you say with loving heart and exultant voice, "this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death!"

The encouragement of the text relates also to the *future* state of the people of God. "And I will give thee rest!"

In allusion to the rest of Canaan which crowned the toils, and succeeded the trials of ancient Israel, St. Paul affirms, "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God!"

The rest of God's people will be

*Complete in its fulness.*

In this respect the experience of the redeemed in heaven will widely differ from that of the Israelites after their entrance into Canaan. Because of its affluent resources of physical wealth and comfort, Canaan was said to be "a land flowing with milk and honey."

Having entered that country the people did indeed rest from the toils and privations of the wilderness; but, alas! it was only to encounter new trials, and grapple with other foes. There were the original occupants of the soil to dispute their settlement, thus devolving upon them all the perils and miseries of a state of war. Sin also followed them to their new home, bringing along with it its dire progeny of sickness, suffering, sorrow and death.

In heaven there awaits the faithful a complete exemption from all physical and moral evil, and the undisturbed possession and enjoyment of all possible good. It goes a great way towards rendering heaven attractive to us that we should be told of its people: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," "and the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick," "and there shall be no more death," "neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," "and there shall be no more curse." But when we remember that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath laid up for them that love him," are we not constrained to exclaim: "I long to depart and to be with Christ: which is far better!" In the language of one of the blessed, now realizing those sublime visions upon which his faith was wont to gaze while he was detained on earth, "Saints in heaven are perfectly happy, because perfectly holy.

*Here* they taste of the streams that flow from the fullness of their Father and their God: *there* they will have come to the fountain itself. *Here* they receive, now and then, a bunch of grapes from the better Canaan: *there* they will have full and free access to the tree of life that is in the paradise of God. *Here* they obtain an occasional glimpse through the entanglements of the wilderness, and through the mists and fogs that hang over Jordan, and see the green fields, and the golden harvests that wave luxuriant and vast on the other side: *there* they will possess the fruitful vineyards, and unfailing well-springs of a perpetual Canaan!"

The rest of God's people will be  
*Eternal in its duration.*

Not such was the rest of the earthly Canaan to the Hebrew host. Individually considered, but a few of them enjoyed it during the few brief years of their mortal life, and were then summoned away. Nationally regarded, their possession of the country as a perpetual inheritance, is to be interpreted in a very modified sense, as their universal dispersion in the world to-day abundantly testifies.

Not so with the redeemed in glory. They shall go no more out forever. They shall be "ever with the Lord." Their continuance in heaven, and advancement in all the honour and happiness which shall be rendered possible to them, shall parallel their endless being. "A perpetuity of bliss is bliss!"

"There's no last time in heaven ! the angels pour  
A still new song, though chanted evermore :  
There's no night following on their day-light hours,  
No fading time for amaranthine flowers ;  
No change, no death, no harp that lies unstrung,  
No vacant place, those hallowed hills among !"


My dear friends ! may it henceforth be said of us :  
" But now they desire a better country, that is, an  
heavenly !" Amen.

## THE SORROWS OF EARTH, AND THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

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### SERMON XV.

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—REVELATION xxi. 4.

HRISTIANITY, above every other system of religion, is eminently spiritual and heavenly.

This applies not only to the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, by which its subjects are fashioned and inspired, but in a striking manner also to the principles and motives by which their obedience to its laws is challenged and maintained.

It was not so with Judaism. On the contrary, it found in the good and ill of man's temporal history the chief sanctions for its requirements. While with one hand it unfolded the inventory of earthly blessings to lure men into and along the path of virtuous life, with the other it wielded the threatening scourge of earthly woes. It rested its claims to the faith and obedience of mankind on the evident basis of sensible realities. It told men earthly things. Christianity tells us of heavenly things. This world, which was as every thing to the one, is as nothing to the other.

To command our attention, win our hearts, and

secure our obedience, Christianity panders not to the sensuality and earthliness of our nature. The evanescent glory of terrestrial dignity, the empoisoning flowers of earthly bliss are not among its incentives. The crown it offers is incorruptible. The riches it bestows are durable. It weans from earth. It beckons us hence. It points to yonder heaven. It speaks to us of fadeless glory, living pleasures, perennial life. So magnificent, so full of delight, so rich in interest are its eloquent descriptions of the heaven of the faithful, that the utter exclusion from it of all known or possible evils, constitutes its feeblest claim to our notice; yet when we read how every cause of grief and desolation has ceased, it is told in a manner so beautiful and touching, that it is difficult to dwell upon them as only negative in their import, but are constrained to regard and rejoice in such statements as though they were positive and all-comprehending.

Such are the words of our text, viewed in connection with that description of heaven of which they form a part. In dwelling upon them we shall consider them as symbolizing the sorrows of earth and foretelling the joys of heaven.

“God shall wipe away all tears!”

Note then —

THE SORROWS OF EARTH HERE SYMBOLIZED.

“*All tears.*”

What are tears? Tears are the silent yet potent eloquence of suffering and sorrowing natures. They

are the kindly provision of the Creator's wisdom, not only to express, but also to soften our trouble and grief. The power to weep is the safety-valve of aching hearts, but for which, beneath the pressure of pain, they would miserably collapse. Sin is the prolific parent of all the evils and miseries of earth, and is, therefore, the cause of all tears. All men are tainted with sin, and consequently are subject to suffering. Wherever we look among the families and nations of mankind, sights and sounds of sin and sorrow arrest the eye and salute the ear. The world is a vast Achor, a place of trouble, a great Bochim, a place of weeping. The tears spoken of in the text are those of the children of God. The divine Father puts His children's tears into His bottle. Let us analyze and classify some of the contents of this bottle.

Here are

*Tears of want.*

Many of the Lord's children are poor. "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." Wealth is very unequally distributed amongst men in this world. While vicious indolence is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day, honest and pious industry is often found with neither home to shelter, nor bread to eat. Sometimes by sudden reverses in trade, men are in a moment reduced from circumstances of affluence to absolute poverty. Others there are who are disabled by

sickness to earn a livelihood for themselves and their helpless families. None but those who have passed through such an ordeal can fully sympathize with this class of our fellow-men. Just in proportion to their laudable ambition to provide things honest in the sight of all men, not to be drones in the social hive, but in a word to be active and useful in their relations to the world and the church, will be the mental anguish endured by those who are chastened by embarrassment and scarcity in their temporal estate. Not to be able to overtake their reasonable desires for the education and general elevation of their families in society, would be a great trial of itself, but to be unable to provide them with the ordinary necessities of life, must be distressing indeed! Many a strong-minded man has, under such circumstances, been compelled to surrender himself to the weakness of tears.

Examine these tears again, and you will find—

*Tears of disappointed affection.*

Man is made for society, made to love, and to be loved. Some of the associations of life are very intimate and confiding. When those to whom we may have yielded our affection and confidence, and in whose fidelity we have implicitly reposed, and from whom we have expected love and sympathy in return, prove faithful, such a friendship is a source of strength and joy. If, on the contrary, such persons prove traitorous instead of trustworthy, our disappointment is bitter, and wounded nature weeps. Ere David



wrote—"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man: it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes!" he had drank the bitter draught of disappointed love. Listen to him: "For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company!" So also Christ proved the inconstancy of human friendship, when Judas betrayed Him with a kiss, and Peter denied Him with oaths. In the sunshine of the prosperous hour, all His disciples with glowing eloquence avowed their love for Him, declaring each man for himself, "though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!" but when the storm came, and danger threatened, then, alas! "they all forsook him and fled." Among the perils enumerated by St. Paul when reviewing his life, were those he met with at the hands of "false brethren." Many of the friends a man meets with in the course of life's journey are false.

"Their friendship is a lurking snare,  
 Their honour but an idle breath,  
 Their smile, the smile that traitors wear,  
 Their love is hate, their life is death.  
 Such friendship is an empty name,  
 A charm that lulls to sleep,  
 A sound that follows wealth and fame,  
 But leaves the wretch to weep!"

A true friend, on the contrary, is one who will never betray or disappoint my confidence,—who will heartily rejoice in my prosperity, sympathize with me in my sorrows, and upon whose support I can firmly depend when all else fails me.

Examine the contents of this bottle again and you will discover—

*Tears of physical affliction and infirmity.*

To what a long train of diseases and maladies are our frail bodies liable and exposed. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, may convey to us the mortal poison. How many victims of painful and life-consuming ailments moisten their pillows with their tears, day by day. Wearisome days and nights are appointed them, and they pour out tears unto God. Then there is old age, with its manifold infirmities! “The days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow.” To the aged, what a sense of loss and desolateness must come when they think of the companions of their earlier years who have long since gone to rest, and left them to linger a little longer in what is becoming more and more to them a land of strangers. Infirmities multiply, and subject them to numerous privations. The eye dims, the ear becomes dull, the natural strength abates, the hands tremble, the limbs totter, fears increase,—and, experiencing, in consequence, a thousand mortifications,

the once strong man bows himself and weeps. What the feelings of an aged man are may be learned from the venerable Barzillai of olden time. He had befriended David in the season of the king's adversity, and now that safety and peace are restored, David seeks an early opportunity to acknowledge his kindness. Permit me to read the story of the old loyalist: "And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king to conduct him over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even four score years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem! And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day four score years old; and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place."

In this bottle are also to be found—

*Tears of bereavement.*

“It is appointed unto all men once to die,” and hence this world is filled with death-beds and sepulchres. No constitution is so strong as to be invulnerable against the unerring arrows of the insatiate archer. No home-circle of earth is so happy as to escape his envy and defy his power to disturb and desolate. The loss of friends by death is severely felt by the pious, since their affections have been educated and intensified by divine love.

“Friend after friend departs:

Who hath not lost a friend?

There is no union here of hearts

That hath not here an end!”

The ruthless King of Terrors spares no tie, however close, and tender, and sacred. Parents and children, husbands and wives, companion and friend, are rudely torn away from each other. Under such cruel strokes, oh how the heart bleeds and utters its grief in sighs and tears! Whose soul has not melted in sympathy as he has gazed upon the inspired picture of the venerable Abraham sitting by the mortal remains of his beloved Sarah, and mourning and weeping for her? Saul and Jonathan fall in battle, and David weaves a poetic garland for their tomb, every word of which—as one has justly said—“is swollen with a sigh or broken with a sob.” Between him and the noble and lovely Jonathan had subsisted a friend-

ship the most pure and tender, and over his grave the sweetest flowers are laid. "O Jonathan thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of woman!"

Later in his life, another wave of sorrow rolls over the royal saint. The tidings reach him from the field of battle that the impious and insinuating rebel—the goodly Absalom—lies numbered with the slain; and at once the solicitude with which he had awaited the issue of the strife is succeeded by an overwhelming sorrow, which a bereaved parent alone can understand. "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

In the earthly life of Him who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," occurred an event which dignifies the sorrow we express, and the tears we shed over the ashes of our loved ones. In the bosom of a small family resident in Bethany the blessed Saviour was wont to find a grateful retreat from the unappreciative, cold, and inhospitable world. In return for their constant attachment and assiduous attentions, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Lazarus sickens, and after a brief illness, dies. The sisters are greatly afflicted. A brother is

born for adversity; and he, their only brother, is taken from them. They send for Jesus. He comes. They tell their tale of anguish, with sobs and tears! He listens, and listening, weeps, mingling His tears with theirs, at the memory of their mutual friend. Thus touched is He with a feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to succour!

Once more we look among the tears in God's bottle, and we find—

*Tears of spiritual sorrow.*

It is the privilege of the children of God to "rejoice in the Lord always," to "rejoice evermore," to "rejoice with joy unspeakable." Hence we sing—

"'Tis religion that can give,  
Sweetest pleasures while we live."

How frequently is it the case, however, that examining themselves by the divine standard of Christian attainments and duty, they discover many a sad discrepancy. They see so much deformity and defectiveness that they are filled with shame and sorrow. Or, if they are cheered by the divine testimony "that they please God," and dwell from day to day in the light of His countenance, it may be that, looking upon the world lying in wickedness, like David, "they behold the transgressors and are grieved," and "rivers of waters run down their eyes," because men keep not the law of their God. Or, with Jeremiah, as they witness the low state of religion in the church,

they exclaim: "Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" So St. Paul felt under similar circumstances, hence in his epistle to the Philippians, we read, "for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even *weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ!" Ministers who are properly alive to the responsibilities of their office, know what it is to "weep between the porch and the altar." And parents, whose children are out of the ark of safety, if they are rightly concerned for those whom God has confided to their spiritual, as well as temporal care, will often be found pleading with God, and weeping in secret places for the salvation of their offspring. The thought that they should be separated from them in eternity is felt to be intolerable, and causes them many an anxious, tearful hour. Would to God such wise solicitude were more general among the heads of families; then more frequently would the prediction be realized, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel!"

Having glanced at some of the sorrows of the children of God, symbolized by the tears mentioned in

the text, we shall now consider what the text tells us about their happy future, since in these words we have—

THE JOYS OF HEAVEN FORETOLD.

“God shall *wipe away all tears* from their eyes.”

What a delightful confirmation is given by this glowing revelation which John received, of the words of Jesus to His sorrowing disciples, “let not your heart be troubled: in my Father’s house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you!” Listen now to the Revelation! “And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” This is the rest which remaineth to the people of God.

*Heaven will be the magnificent sanctuary-home of the blood-redeemed and blood-washed family of God.*

Where that heaven is located it were idle for us to speculate: It may suffice us to know that it is in the “presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.”

*Heaven will be a place of perfect and perpetual happiness.*

All physical and moral evils shall be excluded from that blessed community. *Children of poverty!* When



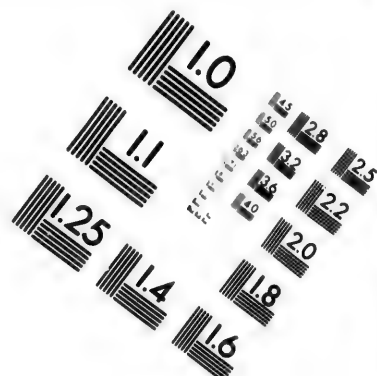
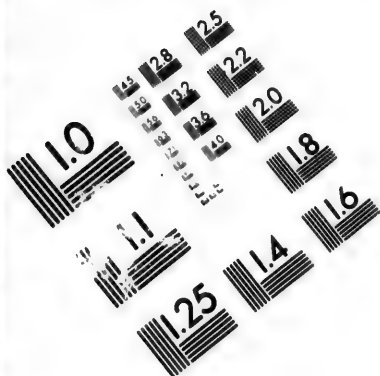
once ye are entered there, ye shall hunger not, neither thirst any more. No more inquire with painful anxiety, "what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewith shall we be clothed?" As the children of the King of the country, ye shall inherit all things, ye shall pluck the ambrosial fruit, and drink the vivifying streams of Paradise. Ye shall wear the royal robes of righteousness, and dwell forever in the palace of angels and God.

*O ye suffering ones of earth!* Ye that mourn the frailty of human friendship: ye shall share the confidence and enjoy the love of a society into which an enemy never enters, and from which no friend ever departs. Are you chastened with pain, prostrated by sickness, or bereaved by death? The inhabitant of that salubrious clime never saith, "I am sick." There death never enters. Mother, in whose heart lingers the precious memory of the innocent babe of whom death robbed thee long years ago! Husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister! Heaven will restore to you all, each one of your holy dead. Then shall your days of mourning be ended—ye shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And you, too, who suffer with Christ here! You who sigh and weep over your follies and failures; who fear lest ye shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy; you who are going forth into the great field of moral labour, scattering the seeds of truth and goodness, weeping as you sow, watch and pray, labour

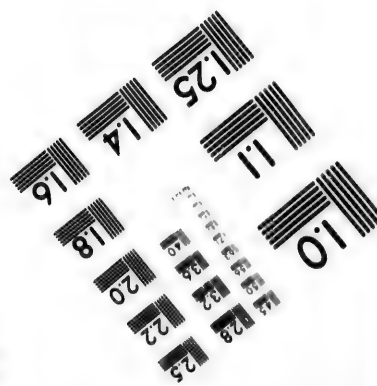
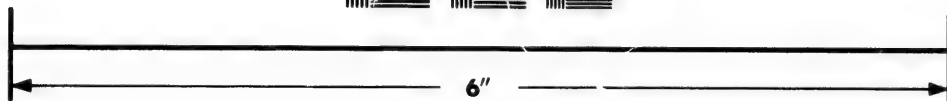
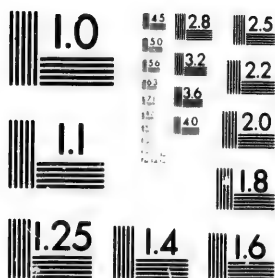
and wait, and weep a little longer, and He who saith, "Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me," will come and take you where every sigh shall become a song, every fear a shout of triumph, every pang of pain be changed into a thrill of pleasure, and for every holy tear ye shall have shed in time, shall flash a brilliant jewel in your eternal coronal. "And so shall you ever be with the Lord!"

In conclusion: How happy the children of God should be! In their deepest sorrows the thoughts of such amazing bliss as is in store for them, should create within them a continual joy. Superior to the short-lived pleasures of earth, live, O Christian, for God and heaven! Let the world know you have tasted Canaan's grapes, and they have spoiled your relish for the leeks of Egypt, or the apples of Sodom.

Do I address any who are living without any reasonable hope of these joys immortal? You, too, have your sorrows and sufferings here. You may have your pleasures, but they are the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. You must die, and what after death for you remains? Celestial joy? or hellish pains? If you die in your sins, you must be driven away in your wickedness, and find your eternal home where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! O be intreated to turn at once to that Saviour, whose heart is still as tender as when standing on the brow of Olivet. He beheld the city and wept over it.



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268     *Draughts from the Living Fountain.*

“His arms of love still open are,  
Returning sinners to receive,  
That mercy they may taste and live!”

Run at once into those outstretched arms, and thou  
shalt be received graciously.

“For sorrow and weeping, you joy shall receive,  
And share in the gladness of all who believe!”

Amen !

## THE PROVOCATION, AND ITS LESSONS.

### SERMON XVI.

"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest."—PSALM xcv. 7-11.

**P**ERHAPS there is no proposition whose truth would be more generally admitted than this, viz: men are prone to forget God. This atheistic tendency of our sin-perverted nature is the root of all that practical evil which is in the world; and against all who live and die under the baleful influence it exerts, the righteous judgment of Heaven is recorded in these awful words: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." In no age of human history has Jehovah left Himself without witness of His existence, character and claims. In addition to the ever eloquent testimony of nature, He has from the first, by the direct revelation of His

will, and His various dealings with mankind, sought so to secure the love of their hearts, as to live in their thoughts, and be honoured in their lives. Despite all these beneficent arrangements from the beginning to the present hour, how few there have been who have hearkened to His voice, and remembered His commandments to do them! The Psalm from which the text is taken proves the justness of these remarks. It was written by David to be used in the public worship of God, in connection with the annual celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles by the Israelitish nation. This feast was one of three important festivals divinely instituted to counteract the human liability of this people to forget God. The Passover, the Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, as distinguished from other of their festive occasions, were of a specially commemorative character. The Passover was a memorial of their redemption from Egypt. The Feast of Pentecost celebrated the giving of the law on Sinai; and the Feast of Tabernacles preserved a vivid recollection of their sojourn in the wilderness. These were events in their history impressively displaying the merciful goodness, the just authority, and the long-suffering patience of Almighty God. The sojourn in the wilderness was particularly remarkable for the inconstancy of the Israelites to their vows of devotion to God—the hardening of their hearts against all His efforts to instruct and save them, and the sad and terrible calamities they brought upon themselves by

their incorrigible disobedience. It was, therefore, very appropriate that the liturgy to be used on such an occasion as the Feast of Tabernacles, should be suited to impress the minds of the worshippers with proper views of Jehovah's claims upon their reverent and obedient homage; and their recognition of those claims should be enforced by the memories which that event was especially designed to revive and perpetuate.

These requirements are fully met by David in this commemorative song. In language glowing with pious fervour he invites the people to unite with him in the worship of God, as the great Creator and Proprietor of the world, their Maker, and the Rock of their salvation. He reminds them also of their covenant relationship to Him, and exhorts them to a prompt attention to all the service He had enjoined, emphatically cautioning them against disobedience by recalling the perverseness of their ancestors in the wilderness, and the just punishment inflicted upon them.

Ages have come and gone since this liturgy was first chanted in Jerusalem, but fallen human nature still needs the lessons it so beautifully and impressively inculcates. That these lessons may engage our attention as they ought to do, consider, with prayer for the divine blessing, the historic allusion, and the instructive and solemn appeal contained in the text.

Notice, first —

THE HISTORIC ALLUSION OF THE TEXT.

As we have already observed, the Psalmist alludes



to the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years. This is called in the text, "the provocation," "the day of temptation in the wilderness." In examining this "*Provocation*," we shall first observe—

*Its nature.*

"Your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work," said Jehovah. By a lengthened series of stupendous and miraculous wonders and judgments had the God of Abraham wrested the oppressed posterity of that saintly patriarch from the ruthless gripe of the iron-hearted Pharaoh. With His mighty hand and outstretched arm had He divided the Red Sea and conducted them over. Amid supernatural developments, the most awe-inspiring and sublime, had He come down upon Mount Sinai, and, in the hearing of their trembling hosts, proclaimed His law. By the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, had He been alike their guardian and guide. When they hungered He fed them from heaven; when they thirsted He made the rocks pour them out water to drink. In these and a thousand other instances, they "saw his work." On certain occasions their professions of attention and obedience to the divine will were loud and earnest, and the Lord heard the voice of their words and said unto Moses: "They have *well said* all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that

it might be well with them and with their children forever." Although frequently called to witness most wonderful displays of the loving kindness of the Lord towards them, they seem never to have yielded Him their hearts. Neither did the judgments with which they were visited produce any saving change in their disposition, or any long-continued amendment in their lives. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant."

Glancing, even thus rapidly, over this history, are we not compelled to exclaim in admiration and wonder: Oh what goodness, what patience, what forbearance on the part of God! and then cry out in surprise and shame against the insultant neglect, the daring wickedness, and the deceitful obstinacy of man?

By a course of conduct in which gross ingratitude and dishonouring unbelief towards God were well nigh constantly manifested, and by abandoning themselves to the most senseless idolatry, did this wicked people, for forty years, provoke the Holy One of Israel to anger.

And here we may reasonably ask: Why did they thus conduct themselves?

We shall note in the next place—

*The Causes of the provocation.*

That course of conduct which proved so offensive to Israel's God resulted from two conjoint causes specified in the text, viz: "This is a people who do err in their hearts," and "They have not known my ways." By the one, I understand "the wrong disposition of their affections;" and by the other, "their wilful ignoring of divine authority." There are no errors so pernicious as errors of the heart! Errors of the judgment may co-exist with a right state of the heart towards God; and, through the discrimination of divine goodness, not fatally hinder a man's salvation. But, it matters not how orthodox an individual may be in his religious creed, there may still be a thorough alienation of the heart from God and His truth. In such a case, not only must the man be destitute of the life and joy and power of salvation, but his guilt and danger be enhanced by the right views of truth which he speculatively entertains. "The truth as it is in Jesus" must be received in the love thereof in order to our being savingly benefited by it. The faith which is essential to salvation is the trust—the repose of the heart in Christ as our chosen and all-sufficient Saviour, for, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," as St. Paul plainly affirms.

The conduct of Israel provoked the Lord to anger because—although they were well instructed in refer-

ence to the divine character and will—they loved the ways of sin, and cast God behind their back. “They do err in their heart,” said Jehovah, “and have not known my ways:” *i. e.*, “they have obstinately rejected My counsels, and refused to obey Me.” Such wilful ignorance is crime of a most aggravating kind. Concerning the descendants of this very people, a few ages later in their national history, did the Almighty complain, “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider!” How unreasonable, how ungrateful, how wicked, such enmity to God and opposition to His government!

We may next consider—

*The Issue of this provocation.*

“Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest!” Having patiently suffered their ill manners for many long rebellious years, such was the course to which Jehovah was compelled by the incorrigible waywardness of this sinful people. This solemn and terrible anathema is recorded in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Numbers, to which you may refer at your leisure. “Now these things,” writes St. Paul, “happened unto them for ensamples,” *i. e.*, warnings for us, lest there should be in any of us “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” Hath He not declared—“He that hardeneth his heart and stiffeneth his neck, shall be suddenly

destroyed, and that without remedy? Who can meditate upon these things and fail to realize somewhat of the import of the Apostle's words: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" Oh what an incalculable loss will the loss of heaven be! Jehovah swears the finally impenitent shall never enter within its gates of gold; never see its glories, partake its joys, or mingle with its society. His justice, truth, holiness and goodness, all forbid it.

Having noticed the historic allusion of the text, we shall proceed to consider—

THE INSTRUCTIVE AND SOLEMN APPEAL IT CONTAINS.

"To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart!" In this eloquent appeal, we have *a fact recognized, a duty indicated, and a caution administered.*

1. *A Fact recognized.*—God speaks to men to-day as He did in days of old. "His voice." This language implies that God speaks; and since our attention is demanded, we are not left to doubt but that He speaks to us. Thus, addressing the Jews of his time, David would mean that as, by the testimony of the Law, the teaching and leadership of Moses, the history of their fathers, and the providential events of their own lives, God had spoken to Israel in the wilderness; so, by His holy prophets, His majestic Law with its solemn sanctions, and the sublime institutions of His worship, was He, even then, speaking to them.

God still speaks to men ! What is the Bible ? Is it not the consolidated voice of the great Jehovah uttering forth the counsels of His will concerning His human offspring ? Here, the everlasting Father speaks from His throne of majesty and mercy. Here, the only-begotten Son addresses you from the garden and the cross, from the court of heaven, where He advocates your cause, and from the tribunal of the universe, where He shall be your Judge. Here, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, speaks by the mouth of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. These Scriptures are the voice of the triune God, and hence appropriately called "the Word of God." With what engaging and impressive earnestness are precepts and promises, invitations and warnings, sounded out through the ages which they chronicle ! Thus, by this holy volume, He is continually speaking to all who possess it.

So also is God speaking to men by the living Ministry. As by prophets and apostles the Lord declared His will to the men of olden time, so by His Ministers is He speaking to the generations of to-day. To them has He given commission to declare the whole counsel of God, saying, "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

The dispensations of His providence in the affairs of nations and individuals are the voice of God to men.

That man has read the history of our world to little purpose who has failed to learn that "the heavens

rule," that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth." Are not the traces of His hand manifest on every page of that history? So also hath He had to do with our personal lives. Are we not conscious of this? How many circumstances memory in a moment summons from the years that are past to testify of His remarkable interpositions in our personal and social relationships! And still He thus speaks. By smiling plenty and gaunt famine—the bloom of health and the pallor of disease—peace, with its security and progress—and war, with its revolting cruelties and crimes—the consuming flame and the desolating storm, God's voice is from time to time lifted up, that men may learn righteousness, and be induced to love, fear, and glorify Him. Is He not speaking, at the present time, by disorders preying upon man and beast, the embarrassments of commerce, and the depression of trade? Should we not be anxious to ascertain what reproof, or admonition, or lesson He designs by these events to administer? By the inroads which death has made in this community during our lives; the thousands of our fellow-citizens, and the numbers of our more intimate friends who have passed away into the land of shadows, how solemnly has the voice of God spoken to us? By the wailing of the wicked, driven away in their wickedness, and by the songs of the sainted dead who "died in the Lord," have we not heard His voice crying to us from the depths of hell and from the heights of heaven, "Prepare to meet thy God?"



Is it not reasonable to inquire, What attention we have given to these appeals? Let us then mark—

2. *The Duty indicated in the text, viz: "Hear his voice."* What is it to hear His voice? Is it not to ascertain and answer the purpose of God in speaking to us? That purpose is unquestionably our salvation. We hear His voice when we read His word prayerfully, with an earnest desire to be made wise unto salvation. We hear His voice when we take heed to the things spoken by His servants in His name; when we receive their message, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, "the word of God;" when we mix that word with faith, and render unto it prompt and hearty obedience. We hear His voice when the mercies of God soften our hearts and lead us to repentance; or His judgments awe us into a reverential submission to His authority, compel us to flee from the wrath to come, or stimulate us to greater fidelity and zeal in making our calling and election sure. Alas, how few thus hearken to the voice that is continually speaking to them from heaven! Diverted by the clamorous demands of the things which perish in the using, the multitude find neither time nor disposition to listen to Him who, expostulating with them, says: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto



me ; hear, and your soul shall live." "Turn you at my reproof ; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you !" My dear friends, how is it with you ? Have you all heard your God speaking to you, and obeyed ? Or are you, grown familiar with His voice, treating His instructions with but little respect, if not with positive contempt ?

Oh, if He has hitherto spoken to you in vain, let me beseech you most seriously to consider —

3. *The Caution administered:* "Harden not your heart." Do not act in such a way as shall tend to increase the insensibility of your nature to that which is right and good ! Repeated acts of resistance offered to the Spirit of grace ; continued closing of the ears to His alarming or wooing appeals can have no other effect than to steel the heart, and sear the conscience. As the mother-bird shrieks when the hawk is in the sky that her young ones may take warning and hide themselves under her wings, so God, the Father of rebellious men, utters His voice of warning, that they, made aware of their danger, may rush to the protection of His mercy before the devouring lion of hell shall overtake them in destruction. Now, every time men hear that warning shriek, and refuse to fly for refuge to Christ, they become less likely ever to do so at all. Some there are, who affect to doubt the reality of these things altogether, and act as though they believed their lie could make

the truth of God of none effect. Let the demon of scepticism once get possession of a man's soul, and his eternal ruin is well nigh assured. There is a story that tells of a bell suspended on a rock, which, being in the middle of the ocean, was exceedingly dangerous to navigation. The waves of the ocean beating upon it caused it to give a peal of warning to keep off the approaching mariner. It is said that at one time some pirates destroyed the bell lest its warning notes should interfere with their nefarious business. Not long after, those very pirates struck upon the rock, and miserably perished. How many there are who take great pains to hush the voice of warning coming forth from the point of danger, who, as soon as the warning ceases, founder upon the rock of temptation, and are lost forever! Others there are who never had a doubt concerning the truth of revelation, and yet are so intoxicated with the pleasures of sin, and the vanities of the world, that they keep saying, like Felix, to those that would lure or fright them from their perilous folly, "Go thy way for this time!" Are any such hearing me now? Then say not, *another time*; but "to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart!" Archias, the magistrate of Thebes, was sitting with many mighty men drinking wine. A messenger came in, bringing a letter informing him of a conspiracy to end his life, and warning him to flee. Archias took the letter, but instead of opening it, put it into his

pocket, saying to the messenger who brought it, "Business to-morrow!" The next day he died! Before he opened the letter, the government was captured. When he read the letter, it was too late to escape.

To-night I put into the hand of every unsaved man and woman in this house a message of life. It says: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart!" Do not, I intreat you, do not put away the message, saying: "This business to-morrow!" To-morrow you may be dead!

Unconverted hearers! I appeal to you once more. I ask you, whether young or old, shall God be heard to-night? Are some of you relenting on account of your long-continued and impious neglect? Is something like this the language of your deeply humbled soul?—

"Our mouth as in the dust we lay,  
And still for mercy, mercy pray:  
Unworthy to behold thy face,  
Unfaithful stewards of thy grace;  
Our sin and wickedness we own,  
And deeply for acceptance groan!"

If such be the spirit and purport of your prayer, then know ye that God waits to speak comfortably to you, and would ye but believe His promises, even now ye might, with gratefully exultant spirit, sing—

"My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear,  
He owns me for his child,  
I can no longer fear.  
With confidence I now draw nigh  
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

Do I, however, address any who are resolving to treat long-suffering Heaven with still further contempt? What more can I say to you in the hope of inducing you to abandon this wicked and dangerous purpose? You may, indeed, refuse to hear and obey the voice of God now, but the period will inevitably arrive when you will be compelled to hear His voice, and obey it too. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." You may be reckoning on years to come, but ere the clock in yonder steeple shall have struck the midnight hour, that man among you who is most confident of lengthened days, may hear the voice of God saying to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee!"

You have procrastinated too long already; while the divine anger is beginning to kindle against you, beware how you still further inflame it by your impious delay!

For years you have been treasuring up unto yourselves wrath against the day of wrath—bethink! beware! I conjure you, of the aggravated hell which moves from beneath, to meet you at your coming!

Have a care how you madly trifle with this terrible reality! Grieve thy God but one day longer by your persistent neglect, and your destiny may be irreversibly determined, and Jehovah, swearing in His wrath,

will say concerning you : “ Because I have called and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me ; for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord ; they would none of my counsel ; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own doings, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them ! ”

May God in mercy save us all from such a fate as that !     Amen !

THE LOVE OF CHRIST, THE STRONGEST  
MOTIVE TO MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

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SERMON XVII.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."—2 COR. v. 14, 15.

**E**MBARKING in any enterprise, men are generally influenced by some impelling principle, which, stimulating their energies and fanning their ardour, continues to operate until they are permitted to exult in its triumphant achievement.

Of all the enterprises in which humanity can engage, that of Christian Missions is the most ennobling and sublime.

That page in British history which shall record the events that have signalized the nation's progress during the last century, will be invested with a peculiar and unprecedented glory. There future generations will read of the brilliant victories achieved by Britain's arms upon the land, and upon the sea, establishing her

power, and extending her sway; of the total abolition of slavery throughout her vast empire; of the majestic stability of her unrivalled constitution, amid the shock of revolutionary upheavings, and the overthrow of ancient thrones in adjoining countries; of the marvellous development of her wealth, the growth of her manufactures, and the enlargement of her commerce; of her railways, her ocean steamers, and her electric telegraphs.

All these will lend incalculable interest to that portion of our national history; but what will constitute its brightest feature will be the chronicle that shall tell the ages to come of that mighty impulse, experienced by the Christian Church, which found expression in various organizations, for the purpose of promulging the religion of Jesus Christ even to the ends of the earth.

The prosperity of such institutions at the present time, exceeds that of any former period, while the liberality with which they are sustained, is altogether unparalleled in the world's history. This circumstance will occasion no surprise to those whose views at all consist with the obligation and moral grandeur of this department of Christian beneficence. Contemplating the vast magnitude of the work to be done, and the ample resources of the Church for its accomplishment, may we not, however, ask, Why are not all professing Christians engaged in its behalf? And why is not the support of its friends

yet more vigorous and devoted? These questions are legitimate, and justly demand a reply. We have considered them, and are convinced that those Christians who, having the ability to contribute to the spread of Christianity in the world, are wont to withhold their hand from this divine charity, partake very sparingly, if at all, of His spirit through the munificence of whose bounty they hope for heaven. As to the greater number of those whose annual offerings are placed upon the Missionary altar, we are deeply impressed with the idea that, what is essential to their more generous and efficient co-operation, is a more just apprehension of the world's wants, associated with a stronger faith in the Gospel, and a deeper sympathy with Christ.

Under the influence of these sentiments we have been induced to invite your attention, at this time, to the love of Christ, as being the highest and strongest motive to missionary enterprise,—since of all the motives by which mankind may be actuated, there is none other so lofty in its nature, so salutary and elevating in its influence, so effective in its operation, and so glorious in its aims.

The love of Christ, as developed in His mediatorial undertakings, supplies the highest motive to missionary enterprise, when we consider—

THE CONDITION OF THOSE TOWARDS WHOM IT WAS  
DISPLAYED.

The necessity of a proper conception of the condi-



tion of those who appeal to our commiseration, in order to the exercise of an intelligent beneficence towards them, must be apparent to all. The Missionary Society has been organized to minister to the moral and spiritual necessities of the unchristianized portion of our earth's population. Do such necessities exist? Many of us have heard and read a vast deal about the dignity and purity of human nature, as described and extolled by those who would have mankind believe that Christianity is a fable, and that such is the moral status of our race as to render them altogether independent of the revelations it professes to make, and of the benefits it proposes to bestow. Let us inquire—

*What is the testimony of the Bible on this grave question?*

From our text we learn that the death of Christ confirmed the faith of St. Paul in a certain truth. What was that truth? "Then were all dead." By this statement, we understand the entire and universal depravity and guilt of mankind to be affirmed. Of all the figures the Apostle might have employed to express his views upon this subject, perhaps none other would have been so apposite and emphatic as the one he here uses, viz, that of "Death." This constituted the dire penalty of original transgression, and may be viewed under its moral and judicial aspects. Born subject to that penalty, men are by nature morally dead. When that solemn and mysterious sepa-

ration is effected between the corporeal and spiritual parts of our nature which we style death, our bodies, deserted of their natural and divinely-intended occupant, and degraded by disorganizing corruption, are held in bondage by the King of Terrors. When therefore we speak of moral death, we mean that, like as the body within the grasp of mortality is forsaken of the soul, so the soul, under the dominion of moral death, is forsaken of God—whose temple it was designed to be—and totally bereft of its original sensibilities and powers, is held captive by the disorganising forces of deadly depravity. Invaded by the destroyer, sin, the soul has been despoiled of its primal dignity, and the bright features of truth, holiness, and love, with which it was once radiant, and in which consisted its resemblance to its Divine original, have been ruthlessly effaced. The light of holy existence once illuminating its exquisitely wrought chambers, has been extinguished by the atmosphere of evil, while he who hath the power of death, *i. e.* the devil, hath kindled there the flames of impure desire and malignant passion. The moral sensibilities are all benumbed by the freezing touch of this sin-begotten death. The understanding, conscience, and affections are under the dark and perverting sway of the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Hence, they are “dead in trespasses and sins.”

They are also dead in a judicial sense.

In the supreme court of His infinite mind, Jehovah

hath arraigned, and pronounced upon a vile and rebellious race, the righteous sentence of eternal death.

Upon the pages of the statute book, by which we shall be finally judged, it is written: "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "He that believeth not in the Son of God, hath not life, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." Such is the inviolable determination of Heaven respecting all who live and die in the love and practice of sin; and from the grasp of this dread sentence no finally impenitent sinner can possibly escape.

Having glanced at the teaching of divine revelation on the subject, let us proceed to inquire—

*What evidence history and modern observation afford in confirmation of inspired testimony?*

What has been, and still is the condition of society in those countries destitute of Christianity? History owns its inability to describe the scenes of revolting horror, violence and criminal pollution, which have desecrated our earth wherever Pagan darkness has reigned, rendering those regions like Sodom for licentiousness, and as Golgotha for human blood. Imperial Rome, the seat of philosophy, and the haunt of the muses, at the zenith of its power and glory, was the blind vassal of the most debasing superstition. At its idolatrous shrines, with all her acknowledged claim to intellectual refinement and advanced civilization, Rome, haughty Rome, bowed herself and adored!

While their fancied divinities were the repulsive embodiments and patrons of every flagrant vice, and of the most diabolical cruelty and crime, orators of deathless fame in strains of wondrous eloquence extolled them, poets of grandest song enshrined their praise in immortal verse, sculptors of unrivalled genius gave them all but life in the exquisitely chiselled marble, and the thronged altars of their gorgeous temples testified the universal devotion to their sway.

Passing over to Greece, let us call at Athens, termed the eye of Greece, the city of the learned, and the school of the world! Behold yonder altar, and read its inscription, and blush while you read—"To the unknown God!" Verily it was so. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools!" "The world by wisdom knew not God."

What history affirms of these more enlightened and highly civilized portions of the ancient heathen world in respect of their ignorance of God, and their extreme moral degradation, it authorizes us to believe was, if possible, more fully applicable to all other Pagan nations.

As to the present period, we are justified in stating that two-thirds of the human family are either wholly given to idolatry, or are the blinded and degraded dupes of various anti-Christian error and superstition. We refrain from any details of the wickedness and woe which are justly referrible to these erroneous systems of faith. Suffice it to say, that while the

advocates of natural religion are eloquent in praise of the simplicity, integrity and happiness of heathen nations, the reliable testimony of Christian Missionaries and others, who—in the interests of science, civilization and commerce—have mingled with these peoples, and studied the character and effect of the religions they profess, must force the conviction upon every unprejudiced mind, that whatever ancient Paganism was, that of modern times essentially and practically is, a compendium of falsehood, impurity and blood.

The love of Christ affords a strong motive to Missionary Enterprise, when we consider—

THE REDEMPTION OF UNIVERSAL MAN WHICH IT HAS ACHIEVED.

“He died for all.”

I am free to confess a paralyzing consciousness of utter inadequacy to discourse upon the Love of Christ, viewed under this aspect, in such a style as shall at all comport with, or even remotely approach its own majestic grandeur. No created intelligence is equal to the comprehension of the sublime mysteries of this exalted theme—

“Which mysteries are a mighty deep,  
Where plummet of Archangel’s intellect,  
Could never yet find soundings, but from age  
To age, let down, drawn up, then thrown again,  
With lengthened line, and added weight, still fails,  
And still the cry in heaven is, “O the depths !”

Though denied ability to fathom the profound depth, scale the height, or explore the vast extent of this all-redeeming Love, yet may we gaze with grateful and loving wonder upon that scene held up to our view in these eloquent words: "He died for all!" To accomplish the stupendous work of our redemption, "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us." "We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels, that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man." Beyond the reach of finite intelligence it may be, but either the doctrine of the Divine incarnation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, as held by the great majority of Christians is true, or else the entire fabric of Christianity is naught but "pillared rottenness." Firmly holding this inexplicable verity, we recognize in the Lord Jesus Christ the representation of offended Heaven and offending man. In His human nature He possessed a capacity to suffer and die for the offender, whilst, by virtue of His divine nature, an infinite excellence stamped all His sufferings with an amplitude of merit to satisfy all the demands of Him against whom the offence had been committed. Thus equipped, He entered the arena as the mighty champion of our sin-despoiled race, and in dark Gethsemane, and on ignominious Calvary, His Love was illustrated in a manner which must forever challenge the admiration of the universe of intelligence. Anticipating this struggle in his mediatorial campaign, He had previously said:

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." That hour, designated by some the crisis of the moral universe, at length arrives, and with these words upon His lips, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death!" He enters within the enclosure of the sacred garden. So intense becomes the anguish which wrings His soul, that, prostrate upon the earth, He thrice implores exemption from this ordeal of woe, saying: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt!" and, as He prays, His agony bathes Him in His own blood. O incomparable Jesus! O surpassing Love! It is, however, in the tragic scene of Calvary that we may witness the transcendent display of Christ's redeeming love. There "he poured out his soul even unto death." There "his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Then it was that in addition to the rejection of earth, He experienced the abandonment of Heaven, extorting the strange, expiring cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then, as if it were impossible to survive a pang so strong as the one occasioned by this latest stroke of wrath, He exclaims, "It is finished!" and amid the trembling of the remonstrant globe, the shivering rocks, the rending veil, the opening graves, the reviving dead, and the pall of gloom which the indignant sun flung over the entire scene, "He yielded up the ghost." Bearing in mind



that "he bare all our sins in his own body on the tree," in His dying cry we hear the announcement of His completed atonement. The accomplishment and efficacy of His redemptive labour, are proclaimed in the significant words of our text, "And rose again." The resurrection proved that His sacrifice had been accepted, and therefore a world spiritually dead might be raised into newness of life—in a word, might be saved. What a wealth of blessedness is in that word *saved*! What is it to be saved? Is it not to be redeemed from guilt and filled with the peace of pardon? Is it not to be made and called "the sons of God?" Is it not to partake the divine nature in the purity of our own? Is it not to dwell within the pavilion of God's peculiarly manifested presence? Is it not to be continually encompassed with the broad shield of divine guardianship? Is it not to enjoy, amid all life's vicissitudes, the soothing and invigorating support of that hope which maketh not ashamed? Is it not to have our dying pillow gilded with the golden glory of the heavenly morning? Yes, it is all this, and vastly more than all this in this world, and then heaven beyond and above it all! And Christ's love has procured all this, and procured all this for all mankind! Glorious truth! "He died for all." In the days of his flesh He said of Himself: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh,



which I will give for the life of the world!" Making Calvary our standpoint, we realize an elevation above all those limitations and restrictions which national prejudice, and the fallible judgment of short-sighted men have placed upon the free bounty of Heaven. We behold Him who "hath made of one blood all nations of men," pouring out His own blood as a ransom for all, and, as we gaze upon His open side, we seem to hear Him exclaim: "The spirit and the bride say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"O Love Divine! O Saviour God!  
At thought of Thee—Thy love,  
Thy flowing blood—  
All thoughts decay—  
All actions done by men,  
Or angels, disappear.  
Absorbed and lost—Thou  
Art all in all!  
O Love Divine! O Saviour God!"

The Love of Christ constitutes the highest motive to Missionary Enterprise, when we consider—

THE CLAIM TO THE ENTIRE CONSECRATION OF ALL  
TRUE CHRISTIANS TO HIS SERVICE WHICH HE HAS  
THEREBY ESTABLISHED.

"The love of Christ constraineth us," "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again."

From the foregoing context it would appear that the enemies of Christianity had attributed the zeal and

self-sacrificing labours of St. Paul and his brethren in the apostleship to motives of pride and vain-glory, and had even gone so far as to pronounce them infatuated or mad. The truth was, when these men—who were utter strangers to the peculiar power and genius of the religion of the Crucified—beheld the moral heroism of the Apostles, their indomitable zeal, their unequalled self-denial, and their unshrinking endurance of trials, privations and sufferings,—the most painful, arduous and severe: when they witnessed their undaunted bearing amid the murderous cries of blood-thirsty persecutors, and their triumphant defiance of the hate of men or the rage of devils, they discovered a moral phenomenon which their base-born and unsanctified philosophy was wholly unable to explain. Then calumny came to the aid of their anti-Christian bigotry, and forged slanders and misrepresentations the most malicious and vile.

To vindicate himself and his brethren against these aspersions, he thus writes to the church of Corinth, in which they had been circulated: "For whether we be beside ourselves it is to God, or whether we be sober it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us." He thus conducts them to Calvary, and would have them recognize in the cross of Jesus the source of that mighty power which had won their faith, their labour, and their lives; and under whose unearthly impulse they had been constrained, or borne along, in their career of reproach, of suffering, and of toil.

Here too, my brethren, let us take our stand, and seek to catch the same sublime inspiration which these distinguished servants of Jesus Christ derived from a similar contemplation!

Through the influence of sin, man has become the incarnation of atheism and selfishness. Alienated from God, his language is, "I know not the Lord, neither will I serve him!" In his relation to society, the ungenerous disposition of his unrenewed heart inquires, with the blood-stained fratricide of ancient times, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What indeed is human history but a terrible and revolting record of "man's inhumanity to man," written in groans, and tears, and blood? No sooner, however, has a man, through divine grace, been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son," than his new nature shines forth in the peerless beauty of heaven-born love. Brought again into a state of vital union with God, the re-creative and attesting Spirit enables him to say, "I love him, because he first loved me." Under the softening and expanding influence of this divinely-begotten affection, he is both disposed and empowered to love his neighbour as himself. The love that beats in his breast is kindred to that which in the person of the Redeemer bled upon the cross, and now pleads in heaven, all-prevalent for guilty man. By this sacred principle he is brought into irrepressible sympathy with the ever-living, ever-loving Redeemer, and a rebellious,

dying world. Governed by its imperial sway he weeps over the wickedness that makes void the law, and insults the majesty of God; and commiserating his sin-afflicted race, in his efforts to bless them, makes the sin and guilt, the pain and peril of perishing humanity his own. Contemplating the freeness, fulness, and power of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, in the light of his own blessed experience, his soul fires up with a holy enthusiasm, and with Wesley, he is prompted to say—

“O let thy love my heart constrain,  
Thy love for every sinner free,  
That every fallen soul of man,  
May taste the grace that found out me.  
That all mankind with me may prove  
Thy sovereign, everlasting love !”

In conclusion: Permit me to ask, Are you all in conscious, practical sympathy with Christ in His world-redeeming purposes? If so, what a sad spectacle meets your eye in the world around you! As the vile slaughter-house of sin, our earth everywhere reeks with the blood of murdered truth, purity, and peace. But it shall not always be so. Of Christ it is written, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” What constituted the joy which was set before Him, and which nerved His soul for the conflict and agony of the cross? Was it not the disinterment of the sepulchred life and hope and happiness of mankind? Was it not the emancipation of a sin-enthralled race; the wiping away of the tears of a weeping and groan-

ing creation, and the restoration of untold millions to the favour and image of God, and to the bliss and glory of heaven? These, verily, were the scenes of moral grandeur which filled the vision, and inspired the soul of the expiring Saviour; and they shall be realized, for they are "visions of God." He shall, by virtue of His sufferings, bring many sons unto glory. The precious sowing of truth, moistened by His blood and quickened by His spirit, shall eventually yield a magnificent harvest, "which shall shake like Lebanon, and flourish like the grass of the earth." Then shall the populous East, with her tawny arms, embrace the Saviour; and the eyes of Afric's sable children glisten with the joy of His salvation. Then shall the red men of our own Continent, through faith in Christ, become the blood-washed and acknowledged children of the Great Spirit. Then shall the Lord's redeemed of every land "return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

"Then shall one song employ all nations,  
And all cry, "Worthy the Lamb,  
For he was slain for us!"  
The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks  
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops,  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,  
Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round!"

History tells us that when Julius Cæsar at the head

of his victorious legions was approaching the city of Rome, he was informed that the senate and people had fled before him. Gazing in admiration upon the deserted capital, he exclaimed, "the people who would not fight for such a city, for what city would such a people fight?" So as we gaze in thought upon our exalted Redeemer, remember what He has already done and suffered for us, and for the world, and yet designs by the agency of His Spirit to accomplish; are we not constrained to exclaim, "the people who would not love and labour for such a Saviour, for what Saviour would such a people yield their love and labour?"

Let every rebel sinner whom we address, at once acknowledge the claims of this loving Saviour upon his love and service, saying—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small,  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!"

And shall not those of us already marshalled beneath His victorious banners, respond to His summons for our renewed and entire consecration to the great work of subduing, and winning the world to His sway, by praying—

"O let me kiss Thy bleeding feet,  
And bathe and wash them with my tears,  
The story of Thy love repeat,  
In every drooping sinner's ears,  
That all may hear the quickening sound,  
Since I, even I, have mercy found!"

May God add his blessing. Amen!

## THE CHRISTIAN, THE PROPERTY OF CHRIST.

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### SERMON XVIII.

“Ye are Christ’s.”—1 Cor. iii. 23.

“THE Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” Of this great truth we may behold many striking illustrations, not only in the constitution and control of the physical universe, but also in that providential and moral government which Jehovah exercises over the interests and destinies of mankind. In accomplishing the purposes of His majestic will, He levies with sovereign ease upon all sorts of material, and enlists all classes of agencies. Nothing is too great, nothing too small; nothing too noble, nothing too mean to serve His design should He choose to employ it. What men may deem accidental circumstances, may be the very means by which He may be pleased to introduce some great social, political or religious change. Even the more repulsive and censurable developments of our fallen nature may be wielded by His infinite

wisdom to evolve some great moral good. In the history of our nation, the weakness and wickedness of one king were the immediate cause of securing the "Magna Charta," so dear to every British subject; while the base and licentious passions of another were divinely overruled for the reformation of the national religion. May we not also justly refer many of those discoveries in science and inventions of art by which the burden of human toil has been lightened, and the social condition of the race so materially improved, to the wonder-working skill of that Being who "knoweth us altogether," and who, in these instances, has laid hold of the indolence and selfishness of mankind, and, yoking them into His service, has, by their agency, wrought out these beneficial results. The circumstances to which we are indebted for this portion of inspired truth, furnish an interesting exhibition of the divine ability to work up the most unpromising material in efforts to benefit and save the bodies and souls of men. It would appear that the Church of Christ at Corinth was the theatre of considerable strife and evil passion, owing to the selfishness of some of its members expressing itself in their partiality for certain of the Apostles. Hence St. Paul, in this chapter, thus addresses them: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal—for ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For



while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?”

From this unhappy circumstance, the Apostle takes occasion to unfold and expound his divinely inspired sentiments upon the constitution, instrumentality and privileges of the Christian Church ; and of all which, the magnificent passage with which our text is connected, may be regarded as an eloquent compendium.

The text affirms—

THE RELATION IN WHICH ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS  
STAND TO CHRIST, viz :—

“*Ye are Christ's.*”

This descriptive utterance is brief and simple in its construction, but embodies a meaning most profound and extensive. In these three words : “*Ye are Christ's,*” are couched all the distinctive elements of the constitution and character of a Christian.

As a Christian, a man is Christ's by *Creation*.

The Lord Jesus Christ has a creative right in every creature, since the universe of matter and mind—embracing a community of worlds, visible and invisible, and every mode of existence, and every form and degree of intellectual endowment—was originated by *His* omnific fiat, “who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature ; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

As a Christian, a man is Christ's by *Redemption*.

The best of English poets has well enunciated the need and agent of human redemption in these words—

“For all the souls that were, were forfeit once,  
And He that might the 'vantage best have took,  
Found out the remedy.”

And what was that remedy? He bought our freedom. With what? With his own blood. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” Brethren, sin placed us as prisoners in the hands of Heaven's majestic and immutable law. That violated law thundered out its deadly curse, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die!” To redeem us from that curse, the mighty ransom was paid down, when on Calvary Christ “poured out his soul unto death.” “For ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” By this self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of every man, Christ has established for Himself a legitimate propriety in every member of the human family. To every one He can truly say, “ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.”

As a Christian, a man is Christ's by *Regeneration*.

The true Christian has been begotten unto Christ by the life-giving and renewing energy of the Holy Ghost, who is scripturally designated, “the Spirit of the Son.” He it is who effectuates in the soul of every penitent believer in Christ, that grand ordination

of God, that all who shall be finally glorified shall be previously "conformed to the image of his Son." Hence in writing to this very church, the Apostle remarks, "now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And what is it to be thus assimilated to Christ's image, and to be possessed of His spirit? Is it not to partake His moral nature, to experience the completion within the soul of that great change so graphically sketched by St. Paul, when he says, "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new?" Yes, it is this, and nothing less than this, for if any man have not this, he is none of Christ's; whatever else of Christ he may have, if he have not the spirit, the image of Christ, he is a stranger and foreigner, and without any just claim to "citizenship with the saints," or membership in "the household of God."

As a Christian, a man is Christ's by his *open avowal of Christ, and practical conformity to His will.*

All who are Christ's can say: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The Saviour has made such confession and conformity the *sine qua non* of saving relationship to Himself. Hear His words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." What does this imply but an open and uncompromising confession of our faith in Christ, associated with fearless and undeviat-

ing obedience to His law under every circumstance of life? While these terms of discipleship to Christ stand unrepealed in the statute book of Heaven, or until Christ shall open a wider door by which men may enter the Temple of Glory, to think of reaching heaven whilst these great principles of life and practice are wilfully ignored, is an idle and dangerous dream. To all who may be entertaining so fatal a delusion, we would say: Remember the reply of Archimedes to the tyrant of Sicily, who grew impatient with the slowness of his method or the difficulty of his theorems: "There is no royal road to science;" and bear in mind that there is but one "highway of holiness" by which you or any others of our race can travel to heaven. Look thither by faith,—gaze through the door which the revealing Spirit hath opened in heaven, and behold that great multitude round about the throne! Do you ask, "What are these? and whence came they?" Then, in the language of our own Wesley, we answer—

"These are they that bore the Cross,  
Nobly for their Master stood,  
Sufferers in His righteous cause,  
Followers of the dying God."

It is only as men are made holy in heart and life, that Christ may be said to be "glorified in them;" only thus do they "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour," and of all such He speaks in terms of high-

est approval, saying: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

As a Christian, a man is Christ's by *mutual affection and glorification*.

We have in the text three words which, though the loftiest flight of uninspired thought must ever fail to reach their sublime import, may yet serve to illustrate more perfectly the relation in which the Christian stands to Christ, viz: "Christ is God's." Do not these words suggest to us the Christian is Christ's to a certain extent, in the same sense in which the Son of God, in the great work of our salvation, is related to the everlasting Father? As Christ is God's great gift to man, so is every Christian God's gift to Christ; and as Christ gave Himself for them, so all true Christians have given themselves to Christ. Then again: "As the Father hath loved me," said Christ, "so have I loved you." So all true Christians can say of Christ: "We love him, because he first loved us." In this connection we are forcibly reminded of the significant utterance of Christ in His valedictory prayer, when He says unto the Father: "I pray for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them!" Here we would observe that the divine Father and Son possess a common interest in the

results of the redeeming scheme. In the salvation of men they are alike glorified; the Son glorifies the Father, and the Father glorifies the Son, hence Jesus prays: "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Again Christ says: "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one;" that is, that they may be Christ's as Christ is God's. How? He Himself explains: "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Again: as the Son hath glorified the Father by executing the mandates of His redeeming will—and in this sense may be said to be God's—so all true Christians, by their virtuous lives and triumphant deaths, bring glory to Christ, and may, therefore, be said to be Christ's.

In writing to the Thessalonians, St. Paul describes an interesting period in the glorious future of the people of God, when Christ "shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe." Then shall the prayer of Christ on their behalf be forever realized: "Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." Thus, brethren, we see that true Christians are Christ's in time and in eternity—in a state of grace and in the world of glory. May this character be yours and mine! Amen.

## ALL THINGS THE PROPERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

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### SERMON XIX.

“For all things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; *And ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.*”—1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

“**B**EHOLD what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !” Besides the untold dignity of such a relationship, O ye children of the Heavenly King, what an inheritance does it bring to you ? Here is a rich casket filled with jewels, the least of which all earth's millionaires would want wealth to buy. Here is a title-deed which constitutes you heirs of all things.

This comprehensive text describes—

THE INHERITANCE TO WHICH ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS  
ARE ENTITLED.

A glance at this Inheritance is enough to convince us of the vast wealth which is therein comprised. How sweeping is the Apostle's language respecting it !

"All are yours." Nor does he deal in glittering generalities. He minutely specifies the details of this great sum of good; so, in our contemplation of the subject, we may follow the order in which the several constituent blessings are brought before us in the text.

We have—

1. *The Living Ministry.*

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas."

The divine institution of a Ministry chosen from among the members of the human family, may be justly regarded as answering to a felt want of the humanity of all ages. So far from being—as some have considered it to be—the parent of the religiousness of mankind, it has itself been called into existence by that very religiousness. We find this view sustained by the fact that Jew and Gentile, Pagan and Christian alike, have had those among them whom they have regarded as endowed with wisdom and purity, and upon whom they have more or less depended for intercourse with Deity. How imposingly did the Priesthood figure among the other institutions divinely given to the Hebrew Church! The Church of the New Testament has its Ministry instead; and if the particular duties of the office differ somewhat under the two dispensations, the design, in either case, has been the same, viz: to furnish a medium of communication between heaven and earth,—a revelation of the Divine will to man, and an enforcement of its requirements upon human attention. In other words:



the Priest of the Old Testament was appointed "to offer gifts and sacrifices" from the people, and for the people to God, and also make known to them the Divine will. The Minister of the New Testament is not ordained to offer any such sacrifices for the people to God, seeing that Christ the great High Priest has, by the one offering up of Himself once for all, for ever put away sin; still he, like the Jewish priest, is Divinely authorized to declare and expound the counsel of God to men. Under both dispensations the institution is a divine gift to the Church. Aaron was designated to the sacred office by the miraculous budding, blossoming, and fruit-bearing of his rod; nor are there any true Ministers of the New Testament but such as have been Divinely called to this holy service, and Divinely qualified to discharge its sacred functions. Such are the men whom Christ gives to His Church. His arrival at the right hand of the Father was signalized by the munificent donation to His Church of a Spiritually baptized and empowered Ministry.

St. Paul calls the attention of the Ephesian Church to this institution of the Christian Apostleship, saying, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." In this chapter the same

Apostle, by various figures elucidates the Divine institution of the Christian Ministry, and the relation it sustains to the Church of God. Addressing himself to the Corinthian believers, as the representatives of the entire Church, he says, "Ye are God's husbandry," that is, God's "arable field," for such the original imports. "Who then is Paul," he asks, "and who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Immediately changing the figure, he says to them, "Ye are God's building," "builded together as an habitation for God through the Spirit." Who then is Paul, or Apollos, or any other of the Apostles or Ministers of Jesus Christ? He replies: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another builded thereon." That is, the Ministers of Christ are designed, by their faithful and earnest setting forth of the doctrines of Christianity—through the blessing of God effectuating their ministry—to add living stones to this spiritual temple. And as in the construction of an edifice, various mechanics skilled in different branches of art are required, so in the building up of the Christian Church the divine wisdom is manifest in the adaptation of the Ministry to the various classes of character with whom they have to deal, and the diversified duties of the pastorate they are called to perform.

Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are each given to the Church, and are each the type of a certain order of talent. In the Church there still exists the necessity for a Ministry distinguished by all the logical acumen and argumentative powers of a Paul; all the rhetorical beauties and winning eloquence which may have marked the deliverances of an Apollos, and all the plain, unadorned, natural, outspoken utterances of a Cephas. The one may not be said to be more or less requisite than the other. The diversity of intellectual endowment and social habit characterizing the ministerial order may also be justly viewed as one of those instances in which the sovereignty of Jesus Christ as "Head over all things to the Church" finds instructive development. The lesson inculcated is one of *humility*, addressed both to the Ministry and the Church, "that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord." In securing men for His service, Jehovah has at different times gone to what seemed the most unpromising places. From following the sheep or the plough; from many of the more humble and unpretending vocations of social life, He has taken men to fill the most eminent positions in the Church and the State,—men who have swayed the hearts of millions, and influenced the destiny of nations. And where did Jesus Christ go to obtain His men? It is true He might, by the same authority, and with the same success with which He levied upon the lowlier classes, have enlisted in His service exclusively such

men as the "beloved Physician," or Paul, whose native intellect had been trained and stored by the educational science of the day; but instead of this, tax-gatherers and hardy fishermen were more numerous chosen by Him than any other. In reference to this circumstance St. Paul writes: "For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things which are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." Herein is the Divine Sovereignty manifested: how careful therefore should the Church be that she do not in any way depreciate those whom God appoints to minister in holy things, seeing that thereby they despise not man, but God. If men come to us with the message of life upon their lips, and bearing about them the divinely-given insignia of the holy office—a heart beating high in its love for Christ and the souls of men, and a glowing zeal for God,—though they may come from the very dregs of society, and have never scented the flowers of literature, gazed upon the lights of science, or tasted the philosophy of the schools, it is at the peril of incurring the displeasure of the God who sends them that we shut our ears to their address,

or laugh them to scorn. Their appointment is according to the will of the God of the temple in which they minister, and if any man, by envying, strife, or division on their account, "defile the temple of God," "him shall God destroy." Paul, Apollos and Cephas are "the messengers of the Churches and the glory of Christ;" so Ministers, with all their diversity of gifts, are given to you in Christ, and are all designed to be "the helpers of your faith, and the promoters of your joy."

The next particular in the order of the text is—

2. *The world.*

There are various senses in which we may understand this expression. In the first place, it is true of the physical world. "The meek shall inherit the earth." The wicked inhabit the earth by mere sufferance on the part of insulted Heaven, but the good—those who are Christ's—occupy it by legitimate title bestowed upon them by the universal proprietor. Of them He says, "they shall dwell in the land." While the vices which debilitate both mind and body, induce the very land to spue out the nations which indulge them, under the skilful and industrious efforts of a virtuous people, the earth smiles a welcome and presents inducements for its possessors to remain. Its various laws, its climates, its vernal showers, its summer sun, its autumnal tints, and its winter's snows are all theirs; the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, the cattle upon a thousand hills are theirs.

Theirs are its forests and fields, its mountains and meadows, its rivers and seas, its fruits and flowers. The Christian may sing—

“For me kind nature wakes her genial power,  
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower ;  
Annual for me the grape, the rose renew,  
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew ;  
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings,  
For me health gushes from a thousand springs ;  
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise,  
My footstool earth, my canopy, the skies !”

Again: The world may be said to be theirs, inasmuch as they are permitted to enjoy as much of its wealth and substance as is compatible with their moral purity, and the safety of their souls. We do not say that God gives them as much as they might wish to possess, in every instance, but in every case, all that is really needful. If indeed the Lord were to allow men to realize all that measure of worldly prosperity which they would fain have, their crank vessels would inevitably capsize, and their precious souls would go by the rail in a sea of ruin. All things necessary for life and godliness shall be given them. So far as the temporal comfort and godliness of His people can consist together, the God of providence will bless them in their basket and in their store.

Again: “The world is theirs,” inasmuch as the hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord, and He can dispose them according to His own will. I presume it was the idea of the Apostle, that God

would give His people favour in the eyes of the world, and so long as their ways should please the Lord, He would make even their enemies to be at peace with them.

Again: We may understand the world as having been given to the Church of God to be enlightened, reclaimed, regenerated and saved by the faithful discharge of their relative obligations. Earth's desolate moral wilds, her forests of superstition and error, her dismal swamps of vice and wickedness, are to be redeemed and cultivated and sown by the agency of the Christian Church. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." To the jeering infidel and the sneering sceptic, to the narrow-minded, pusillanimous, political time-server, to all that would in any degree repress her zeal, damp her ardour, thwart her efforts, or obstruct her movements in this world-evangelizing enterprize, let the Church, binding this talismanic sentence to her heart, "the world is yours," hold up her broad commission; and as she flings herself upon a rebel world, sing in the language of indomitable courage and faith—

"The world cannot withstand  
Its ancient conqueror.  
The world must sink beneath the hand,  
Which arms us for the war."

The next particular in the order of the text is—

### 3. *Life.*

The Apostle may be understood as referring to



physical or natural life. We attach a high value to life. All that a man hath will he give for his life. But such estimate of life may result entirely from the instinctive tenacity with which our nature clings to existence. When, however, we take a higher standpoint and view our earthly life as probationary in its design, being that only season afforded us to secure a meetness for the joys of an eternal life, then its value is indescribably enhanced. Or if we regard life as furnishing us with time and opportunity to labour for God, it must be considered as a great blessing to live. Now life, as given for these purposes, and valuable on these considerations, is the heritage of all who are Christ's. Of them it may be said emphatically: "They live, and move, and have their being in Christ." He is "their life." Their lives are prolonged that they may recover their strength before they go hence, and may lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time which is to come. While such are the objects for which they live, we may say, "their lives are immortal until their work is done." In seasons of apparent danger, when in the prosecution of their holy toil they are exposed to the deleterious influence of inhospitable climes, or to the deadly malice or brutal ferocity of savage men, "life is theirs;" for, saith Jehovah, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." "He holdeth their souls in



life," "and no weapon formed against them shall prosper."

The next particular in the order of the text is—

4. *Death.*

Yes, Death, styled "the King of Terrors," and "the last enemy"—strange as it may seem to some—is classed among the advantages accruing to Christians from their relation to Christ. To them "Death is gain!" They are prepared to die. Sin gives Death its sting. Christians through faith in Christ are made free from sin, and are thereby delivered from the fear of Death. Under the gracious tuition of the Divine Spirit, so real and vivid do the symbolic revelations of celestial glory become to their spiritual vision, that they intensely "long to depart and be with Christ," which is far better. Yes, to them "Death is gain:" for, by this door, they escape from prison and glide into glorious liberty from the toils and vexatious ills of this mortal state. Death introduces them into the interminable and hallowed rest of the saint's eternity. Crossing this narrow Jordan, they enter the heavenly Canaan—

"Where everlasting Spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers."

In fine: Death to them is the gate to life. They die to live! To them Death is the fulfilment of desire, the realization of hope, the reward of labour, the consummation of bliss. "Blessed are the dead

who die in the Lord!" Death is most emphatically *theirs*, because, though their bodies are cut down by his stroke, and deposited in the grave where they shall see corruption, still, when the resurrection morn shall dawn upon this world of sepulchres, then "the dead in Christ" shall rise first,

"And decked in full immortal bloom,  
Attend him to the skies."

Death is theirs, inasmuch as their relation to Christ affords the consolatory assurance that no contingency, not even Death itself, has any power to separate them from the love of God, or violate that imperishable tie that unites the members of the redeemed family to each other. Through this hope-irradiated portal they enter that brighter world where they are greeted by those who have preceded them in their entrance upon the life everlasting,—and where, sooner or later, they shall be overtaken by those dear ones whom they wept to leave behind. Under the inspiring influence of these immortal hopes, the Christian alone can sing—

"Thy stroke, O Death! terror of the world, I hail;  
'Twill snap the fetters of my captive soul,  
And set me free, free to wing the vasty realms of being,  
Inbreathe the freest air of life Divine,  
And bask me in the sunshine of eternal love!"

In conclusion: The Apostle adds, lest anything had been overlooked, "*Or things present, or things to come.*" "*All are yours.*" This is the same as

though he had said, 'All things secular and spiritual which you may ever need in the present time or world, and all things which are laid up in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time—in a word, earth and heaven, time and eternity—all, all are yours—for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

Brethren, are we Christ's? If so, how indescribably wealthy is our portion! How grateful we should be! How contented and happy! How anxious we should be to make some becoming returns to Him for His infinite goodness thus manifested towards us! If we have been addressing any who are not thus savingly related to the Saviour of sinners, permit us to ask, Can you afford to do without Him? You might possess the wealth of the Indies, but if you are a rejector of Christ, you are unutterably poor! you are perishingly destitute! Let every alien hasten to receive Christ as his personal Saviour, and thus secure a Heaven-imparted title to this golden inheritance!

May God add his blessing! Amen.

## DAVID AND GOLIATH: A SERMON FOR THE YOUNG.

### SERMON XX.

"So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling, and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him."—1 SAMUEL xvii. 50.

**D**ELOVED young friends and dear children! The text I have chosen brings us to a vast battlefield where two great armies, numbering many thousands of men are arrayed against each other, expecting every moment the havoc of battle to commence. Oh, what a terrible and cruel thing war is! Ever since Cain killed Abel men have got angry, and quarrelled, and fought, and killed one another. It is supposed that many times more people than are now living upon the earth, have been killed by their fellow-men in war.

Boys and girls are generally very fond of looking at soldiers on parade. They like to see their handsome uniform, their gay colors, their flashing swords and gleaming bayonets. They listen with pleasure to the stirring music of the band. All this is very pretty,

and very pleasant, but while gazing at such scenes, children, like older people, forget the many miseries and evils occasioned by war. It is nearly 1900 years since Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and angels came from heaven and sang, "glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will to men!" But to-day the armies and navies of the world are greater than at any former period. We must, however, believe and expect that, as the gospel fulfils its design among the nations, men will learn to love and forgive each other. Then wars shall cease unto the ends of the earth. The nations shall learn war no more, but "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Let us pray more earnestly that the Lord may hasten that happy time. Now come with me to the battle-field described in this narrative, and first witness the scene transpiring there; and then inquire what lessons it is suited to teach.

LET US WITNESS THE SCENE TRANSPIRING ON THIS  
BATTLE-FIELD.

It is a time of war between the Israelites and the Philistines. The Israelites are the people of God. The Philistines are Heathen, and are the enemies of God and His people. These two great armies have approached very near to each other. Do you see this valley? This is the valley of Elah, running north and south. On the eastern side is the camp of Israel, and on the western side is that of the Philistines. For forty days in succession have these two armies

been looking at each other face to face, and twice each day a man of gigantic stature has come out of the camp of the Philistines and stood on the middle ground between the two armies, and challenged the Israelites to send out a man to fight with him. Who is this giant? He is Goliath of Gath. He is more than ten feet in height, and is possessed of great strength. He is also covered over with armour from head to foot, and is armed with a sword and a spear. This giant was one of the famous generals of the Philistines. Now, king Saul, had no giant soldier in his army to match Goliath, but he offered a large reward to any one who would go out and fight the giant. Day after day passed and not a man came forward. While this was going on, and every man in the camp of Israel was in alarm and anxiety, a shepherd-boy from the hills came into the camp. Who was he? This youth was David, the son of Jesse. Jesse was an old man dwelling at Bethlehem-Judah. He had eight sons, and being too old for military service himself he had sent his three eldest sons to follow Saul to the battle. David was the youngest son, and was employed in taking care of his father's sheep. Several days having passed since his sons had left him for the field of conflict, the old loyalist had become anxious to hear from them, and also learn how the fortunes of war were turning; he therefore said unto David, "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the

camp to thy brethren ; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge."

Now it happened that just as David was saluting his brethren, there came out the champion of the Philistines, Goliath of Gath, and repeated his haughty and insulting challenge.

When David heard these words, and saw the great fright they produced among the men of Israel, he asked, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

"And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men : and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said

unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go, for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that



thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David."

This narrative is fraught with instruction; we shall therefore next inquire—

WHAT LESSONS IT IS SUITED TO TEACH.

Among those lessons—for we have not time to remark upon them all—there are a few more prominent than the rest, to which we ask your particular attention, viz :

1. *Goliath and the Philistine army may be regarded as representing to us the enemies and difficulties which we have to face and conquer in order to be Christians.*

Satan is the great Goliath, the gigantic champion of the army of evil. He fights against God, and against God's people, and all who wish and strive to be good. He is very wicked, and is described in the Bible as being a murderer, a liar, a destroyer, an adversary going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is much wiser and stronger than the wisest and strongest of men, and is constantly trying to make children and grown-up people as bad as himself, so that God may be angry with them while they live, and send them to hell when they die.

*Our own evil nature* is in sympathy with Satan, and is enmity to God and all that is good. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." This unholy nature exhibits itself in vain pride, envy, jealousy, falsehood, dishonesty, hateful anger and murderous malice.

Then there are *the influence and example of the wicked.*

Not satisfied with being wicked themselves, they seek to entice others into the evil ways in which they

delight. Thus it is that sabbath-breaking, swearing and drunkenness are so prevalent. At some time, or in some way or shape, this threefold foe will have to be met by all who endeavour to serve God and "do the right."

What are they to do?

2. *The conduct of David illustrates the only way in which these enemies are to be overcome.*

David's conduct was expressive of an intelligent and practical trust in God. About eight years before this period in his life, David was converted. The Lord said unto him, "Seek ye my face," and he replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Then the Lord regarded him with special favour; and having chosen him to be king over Israel instead of Saul, he sent the venerable Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint David for this high position. So soon as the sacred oil was poured upon his person by the prophet, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David, and came upon him from that day forward. Then David loved the Lord, and felt the strongest confidence in Him. The greater part of the time between his conversion and his coming to the scene of the battle, he was acting in the capacity of a shepherd-boy, tending his father's flocks. Here, however, the Lord was educating him for the service of his after life. One of the incidents of his shepherd experience came to his recollection, and greatly emboldened his faith as he gazed upon the defiant Philistine. Hence, when Saul said to him,

"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth," David said unto Saul, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said, moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Thus was he prepared for his encounter with the gigantic Goliath. So is it still. By the smaller trials of to-day are we disciplined for the greater ones of to-morrow. What a wonderful power this faith in God is! Such a faith clothes the soul with an armour more impenetrable than that of Goliath, and endues with a strength and heroism infinitely superior to those which he displayed. What is this faith? does some child ask. In reply to this inquiry, let me relate the following anecdote: The Rev. Richard Cecil, an eminent minister of the last century, says, among other of his memorable utterances: "Children are capable of very early impressions. I imprinted on my daughter the idea of faith at a very early age. She was playing one day with a

few beads which seemed wonderfully to delight her. Her whole soul was absorbed in her beads. I said, 'My dear, you have some pretty beads there!' 'Yes, father.' 'And you seem vastly pleased with them.' 'Yes, father.' 'Well now throw them behind the fire.' The tears started into her eyes. She looked earnestly at me, as if she ought to have a reason for so cruel a sacrifice. 'Well, my dear, do as you please, but you know I never told you to do anything which I did not think would be for your good.' She looked at me a few moments longer, then, summoning up all her fortitude, her breast heaving with the effort, she dashed them into the fire. 'Well,' said I, 'there let them lie; you shall hear more about them some other time; but say no more of them now.' Some days after I bought her a box full of larger beads and toys of the same kind. When I returned home I opened the treasure and set it before her. She burst into tears with excess of joy. 'These, my child, are your's, because you believed me when I told you to throw those pretty beads behind the fire. Your obedience has brought you this treasure. But now, my dear, remember as long as you live *what faith is*. You threw your beads away when I bid you because you had faith in me that I never advised you but for your good. Put the same confidence in God; have faith in Him, that in all He requires of you He means your good.'"

O yes, little children may have this mighty faith in

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God, which will make them strong and brave to do right, and to die rather than do wrong; and in proof of this let me tell you a story.

"Not long ago, on board an English steamer, four days out from Liverpool, a small boy was hid away behind the cargo. He had neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, friend nor protector, among either passengers or crew. Who was he? Where did he come from? Where going? Only nine years old, the poor little stranger, with ragged clothes, but a beautiful face, full of innocence and truth! Of course, he was carried before the first mate.

"'How came you to steal a passage on board this ship?' asked the mate, sharply.

"'My step-father put me in,' answered the boy, 'he said he could not afford to keep me or pay my passage to Halifax, where my aunt lives. I want to go to my aunt.'

"The mate did not believe the story. He had often enough been deceived by stow-aways. Almost every ship finds, one or two days out at sea, men or boys concealed among the cargo, trying to get a passage across the water without paying for it. And this is often troublesome as well as expensive. The mate suspected some of the sailors had a hand in the little boy's escape, and treated him pretty roughly. Day after day he was questioned about his coming, and it was always the same story—nothing less, nothing more. At last the mate got out of patience, as mates

will, and seizing him by the collar, told him unless he confessed the truth in ten minutes, he would hang him on the yard-arm. A frightful threat, indeed.

"Poor child, with not a friend to stand by him! Around him were passengers and sailors of the mid-day watch, and before him the stern first officer, with his watch in hand, counting tick-tick-tick of the minutes as they swiftly went. There he stood, pale and sorrowful, his head erect, and tears in his eyes; but afraid? —no, not a bit!

"Eight minutes were already gone. 'Only two minutes more to live,' cried the mate. 'Speak the truth and save your life, boy!' 'May I pray?' asked the child, looking up into the hard man's face.

"The officer nodded his head, but said nothing. The brave boy knelt down on deck, with hands clasped and eyes raised to heaven, repeated the Lord's prayer, and then prayed the dear Lord Jesus to take him home to heaven. He could die; but lie—never! All eyes were turned towards him, and sobs broke from stern hearts.

"The mate could hold out no longer. He sprang to the boy, took him in his arms, kissed him, and told him he believed his story, every word of it. A nobler sight never took place on a ship's deck than this—a poor, unfriended child, willing to face death for truth's sake!

"He could die; but lie—never! God bless him! Yes, God stands by those who stand by Him! And



the rest of the voyage, you may well think, he had friends enough. Nobody owned him before; everybody now was ready to do him a kindness. And everybody who reads this will be strengthened to do right, come what will, by the noble conduct of this dear child."

Yes, this faith takes away the fear of death from all who possess it. Dear little children, as young as any of you, have manifested the power of this faith when death has laid his cold hands upon their young hearts. The visitor to that sweet and sacred spot, Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, United States, may see in a little precious plot of ground, a small mound, over which affection has placed the memorial marble, upon which Calverley, the sculptor, has carved the features of a sunny child-face, under which is written, in his broken childish speech, his last Sunday School text, which was used by the dear child in commending his departing spirit into the care of his precious Saviour:

"Hide me under de sadow of dy wing."

Sustained by this faith children have gone singing home to glory.

Such a scene was witnessed, not many years ago, in one of the towns of New England. One day the alarm of fire was sounded in an extensive cotton mill, within whose walls hundreds of persons were busily employed. Among these was a large number of children. The mill was on fire. The flames spread rapidly, and it was soon discovered that many of the



children were in that part of the building from which, owing to the position of the fire, it was impossible to rescue them. As soon as this melancholy fact was ascertained, they were informed that there was no chance to save them, and were directed to prepare for their sad, but inevitable fate.

No sooner had they received this terrible intelligence, than they all joined hands and began to sing :

“ My heavenly home is built on high,  
Far, far above the starry sky.  
Its glittering towers, the sun outshine,  
Its happy mansions shall be mine.  
I'm going home, to die no more.”

Thus they continued to sing until the cruel flames burst in upon them, and then, with the notes of a Heaven inspired, and Heaven sustained faith upon their lips, they passed away to the heaven of which they sang.

3. *Goliath represents the enemies of God and His cause, and David's successful conflict with him teaches us that God can employ very unlikely means to subdue them.*

As they gazed at the formidable Goliath, saw him brandishing his huge spear, and heard his boastful challenge and awful threats, neither king Saul nor any of his officers would ever have thought of sending the stripling David out to encounter him. No, they doubtless thought that because they had no man in all the army of the same size and armour as the

giant, that it was impossible to overcome him. But God is wiser than men, and to teach them that they ought to trust more in Him and less in the instrument or means they might employ in fulfilling the duties or mastering the difficulties of life, He selected the young and rustic David to be the hero of this grand achievement. So has it often been in the history of the great moral battle-field of the world. The earlier victories of the Christian religion were fought for and won by men who, in the esteem of their adversaries, were ignorant, presumptuous or fanatical babblers. So, also, in many instances the conversion of notoriously wicked persons has been brought about by the instrumentality of little children. Men who, in the pride of their unsanctified intellect, and in the malignant evil of their vile nature, had long and successfully defied the best contrived and most determined efforts of ministers and others to convince them of their error, and persuade them to a better life, have been made the prisoners of the Lord by some arrow of truth lodged in their heart through the innocent prattle, or unselfish prayer, of some lisping child. In many an instance has it been true that "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" has the great Commander "ordained strength" for the conquest of His foes. What encouragement does this circumstance afford to all who are engaged in the religious instruction of the young, seeing they know not but the Lord may be pleased to make the children

whom they are teaching more successful, even in their childhood, of winning souls for Christ, than all the pulpits in the land. From among the many instances which I might relate in illustration of the efficiency of dear children as workers for God, let me give you two or three. "Some time since, an interesting account of an infidel's conversion was given in a daily prayer meeting in Chicago. It is said that the man, while on his way to take the cars for the East, heard a little Irish boy who was sitting on a door-step, singing—

"There'll be no sorrow there,  
There'll be no sorrow there."

"Where?" inquired the sceptic, whose mind was impressed by the words. "Where is it there'll be no sorrow?" The boy answered:—

"In Heaven above,  
Where all is love,  
There'll be no sorrow there."

"The infidel hastened on to take his seat in the cars, but the simple words of that hymn or chorus had found a lodgment in his mind. He could not drive them from his thoughts. They were fixed. A world where there is *no sorrow*! This was the great idea that filled his mind. It was the message of the Spirit, spoken by the lips of a child, that led him to that Saviour, who delivers the lost and ruined from sin here, and raises them to that world of joy and glory where sin and sorrow are unknown."

"An English collier had spent a great portion of his life in a very careless and ungodly manner. Neglecting to attend the house of God, he was grossly ignorant of spiritual things. Such were his vicious habits and aversion to all that was good, that his case appeared very hopeless. He was, however, induced to permit the attendance of his children at a Sabbath School. It pleased God to afflict one of the daughters of this wicked man with a mortal sickness; but, before her death, she was instrumental in awakening her father to attend to the concerns of his soul. 'Father,' inquired the dying child, 'can you spell Repentance?' This artless question, like the smooth stone out of David's sling, it was, that sank into his soul and did the work. 'Spell Repentance!' repeated the astonished father. 'What is Repentance?' He was taught its meaning, sought and found the Divine grace, and was savingly changed in heart and life."

"A gentleman lecturing in the neighbourhood of London, said: 'Everybody has influence, even that child,' pointing to a little girl in her father's arms. 'That's true!' cried the man. At the close he said to the lecturer, 'I beg your pardon, Sir, but I could not help speaking. I was a drunkard, but as I did not like to go to the public house alone, I used to carry this child. As I approached the public house one night, hearing a great noise inside, she said: 'Don't go, father!' 'Hold your tongue, child.' 'Please father don't go!' 'Hold your tongue, I say.'"

Presently I felt a big tear fall on my cheek. I could not go a step farther, Sir. I turned round, and went home, and have never been in a public house since; thank God for it. I am now a happy man, Sir, and this little girl has done it all; and when you said that even she had influence, I could not help saying, 'That's true, Sir.' All have influence."

And now, for one more—

"A sorrowing mother wept in solitude the loss of her beautiful boy, gathered in an hour from her loving arms to the fold of the good shepherd above. She thought of the bright promise of his budding intellect; and the earnest wish of her heart had often breathed that her darling boy might live to be useful in winning souls to Christ. And then rose the murmured thought, 'Why was he not spared to do some good in the world.'

"Then her door opened softly, and an aged domestic stood before her, and with choked voice and tearful eyes, begged permission to speak with her. 'Missus,' said the sable African, 'I want to be baptized.' The lady was surprised, not less than rejoiced; for she had often prayed for her, and earnestly sought to lead her to Jesus, and as often mourned that every effort seemed in vain.

"'How long,' she inquired, 'since you have felt this desire, or believed yourself a fit subject for this solemn ordinance?' 'Ah, Missus,' said the weeping negress, 'ever since that sermon little Willie

preached to me the day before he go up yonder,' pointing upward, 'and, if I ever get to that blessed place, it be he, through Great Master's grace, that bring me there. All that day I thought of all he said to me, and I could see the tears shining in his bright eyes. That night, alone in the dark, I went to my Saviour as I never went before; and that night He shined into my poor darkened heart till all was light, and clear, and joyful. I trust now He will help me always to do His holy will, and bring me at last to meet that blessed child in His own kingdom.' What a balm to that pious mother's bleeding heart was this precious evidence that her loved one had not lived in vain! That pious mother's teachings had taken deep root in her child's heart; and that little child's simple words accomplished, with God's blessing, what many a mightier weapon had failed to do."

But I will not much longer detain you. I wish, however, to ask you, my dear young friends, 'Do you not all wish to join the army of Jesus, the Prince of Peace?' The church is that army, and Jesus, the captain of her salvation is leading her forth against the marshalled hosts of evil and error, of ignorance and crime. The battle is raging all the world over.

"Amid the hurrying crowds of time," the movement of the church is calm, and slow. Calm, because of conscious strength; slow but sure, and never backward. The army needs recruits; needs the young to join her ranks, to share her arduous

toils, and at length participate in her complete triumph and its following glory. Who among you will say of the Lord and of His people: "This people shall be my people, and their God my God?" Every thing of *real* importance to you for both worlds may depend upon the choice you shall make to-night. It may seem a small thing to say *yes* or *no*, but how incalculable the interest attaching to a single word under certain circumstances!

"In a dark night there was once a ship coming into one of our American harbours. She had been to India on a long voyage of a year or two. She had a very costly cargo on board. The captain and all in her were hoping and expecting soon to see their friends and their homes. The sailors had brought out their best clothes, and were clean and neat. As they came bounding along over the foaming waters, and drew near to the land, the captain told a man to go up to the top of the mast and 'look out for the lighthouse.' This lighthouse stood at the entrance of the harbour. Soon the man cried out 'light ahead!' Then they all rejoiced, and knew they were near the harbour.

"While they had been gone this lighthouse had been removed to another place, away from where it was when they sailed. But the captain knew nothing about that. So they kept sailing in what they supposed was the old way. In a short time the man at the mast-head cries out, 'breakers ahead!' that is,

rocks just before us, 'and the ship is just on them!' The captain just cast his eye out on the dark waters and saw the white foam of the rocks. In a moment he cries out, 'Starboard the helm.'

"Now, see, how much may hang on one little word. The man at the helm mistook the word and thought the captain said, 'Larboard the helm.' So he turned it the wrong way. It was done in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye. But it was turned the wrong way, and the ship struck on the rocks the next moment, and was dashed in a thousand pieces. The cargo was lost, and every soul on board, except one or two, were drowned. All this hung upon one little word."

What shall your answer be to-night? Will you say Yes? or No?

Oh I trust you all have answered Yes, and are prepared to sing, with heart and voice, this little song, so full of decision, purpose, and elevating hope, viz :

"We've listed in a holy war,  
Battling for the Lord,  
Eternal life, eternal joy,  
Battling for the Lord!  
We'll work till Jesus comes,  
And then we'll rest at home.

Under our captain, Jesus Christ,  
Battling for the Lord!  
We've listed for this mortal life,  
Battling for the Lord!  
We'll work, &c.



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We'll fight against the powers of sin,  
Battling for the Lord !  
In favour of our heavenly King,  
Battling for the Lord !  
We'll work, &c.

And when our warfare here is o'er,  
Battling for the Lord !  
This strife we'll leave, and war no more,  
Battling for the Lord !  
We'll work, &c.

Our friends and kindred then we'll meet,  
Upon the heavenly shore,  
And ground our arms at Jesus' feet,  
Upon the heavenly shore.  
We'll work, &c."

Dear children, with many of you I am familiarly acquainted, and cherish for you a growing affection. I anticipate meeting you on the street or at your homes, with much pleasure, and am disappointed if I fail to do so. We shall not be here always. We may soon see each other upon earth for the last time. Shall I meet you all in Heaven ?

May God of His infinite mercy grant us that supreme joy ! Amen and Amen !

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

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### SERMON XXI.

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—DANIEL xii. 4.

**M**AN is naturally ignorant. He has everything to learn. The Bible is a book of knowledge. Here we are furnished with records of the past, and revelations of the future. The text belongs to the latter, and refers to our own days. Our topic this evening is "Christian Education." On this subject three inquiries may engage our thoughts, viz :

I. IN WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONSIST ?

II. WHAT ADVANTAGES ACCRUE FROM SUCH EDUCATION? and

III. ON WHOM DOES IT DEVOLVE TO PROVIDE SUCH EDUCATION ?

First.—IN WHAT DOES THIS EDUCATION CONSIST ?

The eminent Hooker has defined education thus :  
"Education is the means by which our faculty of reason is made both the sooner and better to judge rightly between truth and error, good and evil." This definition will apply to Christian education, which embraces

intellectual cultivation, moral development, and spiritual instruction.

1. *Intellectual cultivation.*

Man is endowed with mind, as distinguished from instinct. God our maker has made us to know more than the beasts of the field, and wiser than the fowls of heaven.

“Brutes soon their zenith reach,  
But were man to live coeval with the sun,  
The patriarch pupil would be learning still.  
Yet, dying, leave his lesson half unlearn’t.”

Every human mind is invested with certain elementary capacities or powers, which in every individual are precisely the same in kind, though distinguished by a large variety in measure or degree. The poor Indian of untutored mind—roaming the forest, and herding with the beasts of the field—has every faculty which gave might and mastery to the soul of a Bacon or a Newton ; the difference between them resting not in their constitutional capacity, but in the measure of intellectual culture to which they have been respectively subjected. A wise education appeals to all the native powers of the mind, disciplines and instructs them, and thus fits them for the practical uses and purposes of life.

2. *Moral development.*

By *moral*—when spoken of God or of man—we understand any order of legislative authority, or of corresponding accountability. It must always answer

to some case or question of government. *Moral rule* is that of creatures who can be influenced by intelligent motives, under laws suitable to them. *Moral obedience* is the conformity of such creatures to those laws. Among such creatures stands man. Besides other ennobling faculties, the human soul is endowed with the princely power of conscience. The function of conscience is to discern between right and wrong as distinguishing our own moral disposition and voluntary action, and the dispositions and voluntary actions of other free agents. In order that the decisions of conscience be just and true, there must be an authoritative standard of right and wrong. The Bible supplies this. It is found nowhere else. There can be no moral improvement unless conscience is reached and instructed in what is right and true. Natural science does not do this. There is no connection between *mechanical principles* and *morality*. Making a steam engine, or weighing a planet, teaches or impresses no moral idea. Hence, high intellectual refinement and the finest gifts of genius have been, and are often found associated with enthrallment by the vilest immorality. The Bible instructs the conscience, and teaches morals in connection with doctrines and promises. Not only does it inculcate our duty, but explains why it is our duty. This leads us to observe another department of culture to which Christian Education justly assigns a prominent place, viz :

8. *Spiritual instruction.*

Man has been made capable of God. Inheriting the moral as well as physical effects of the original transgression, he is alienated in spirit and practice from God. The Bible charges him with rebellion against God, and declares him guilty and condemned. But it does more than this. It furnishes the grand revelation of divine mercy towards the race, in the person and redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It unfolds and enforces the only plan of reconciliation with God—through repentance for sin and faith in Christ—illustrated by a life of obedience to the Divine law. These are truths of awful and everlasting concern, and to know them properly is of supreme moment to all.

Having glanced at the import of Christian Education, we pass on to our second inquiry, viz :

## II. WHAT ADVANTAGES ACCRUE FROM SUCH EDUCATION ?

These may be arranged in the following order, viz :

1. *Personal advantages.*

“The Christian is the highest style of man.” What a source of virtue, strength and happiness does such an education as we have been considering supply ! He whose mental, moral, and spiritual nature has been so cultivated, may be said to have the freedom of the universe. Nature in all her departments is open to his intelligent inspection, and responsive to his skilful touch, places all her materials and forces at his command.

"The law of the Lord is in his heart," and actuates him in all the relations of life; not only shaping his conduct by its principles, but subjecting his appetites and passions to its sway.

Brought to a right understanding of his relation to God and eternity, and having sought and found mercy, he has peace with God, has power over sin, is delivered from the fear of death, and under all the sorrows and sufferings of this mortal state is soothed and supported by a well-founded hope of a final home in heaven. Besides these, there are—

## 2. *Civil advantages.*

Man is made for society. The character of a community is determined by that of the individuals who compose it. The comforts and conveniences of life, useful arts, salutary laws, and good government, are all introduced and promoted by Christian Education. Ignorance is the negative and enemy of everything good and useful. Under its baleful patronage, error and evil of every sort grow and flourish. In the darkness of its night, neither life nor property is safe. Vice with its debaucheries and misery, anarchy with its ruthless mobs, or political despotisms with their tyrannies and slaves, and ecclesiastical assumptions with their frauds and their dupes, are born and bred in its unhealthy shade. On the other hand, Christian Education provides wise and just legislators and rulers, and constitutes intelligent, conscientious, and law-abiding citizens. We have first the Christian, then

the Christian family, then the Christian commonwealth, distinguished by progress in learning, art, commerce, science, philosophy, and religion. All this, that knowledge which is sanctified by the fear and love of God, will do for the individual and for the nation.

Without this knowledge there can be no national strength or stability. Permit me to enforce these statements by a quotation from the pen of the late Rev. R. Watson. He writes: "To this the refined nations of antiquity bear mournful but instructive testimony; and why--on a subject so solemnly important to our children and to our land—is not the voice of history regarded? She has written them refined, learned and mighty, but she has recorded their vices, and points to their desolations.

"If learning could have preserved them, why has their science survived their political existence, and why does it live only in other climes? Were they without that knowledge, the attainment of which we have too often considered to be the chief, or exclusive end of education? Were they destitute of genius and taste, and arts and philosophy? In all, they are the confessed models of modern nations, and that State has the highest fame which most successfully, though still distantly approaches them. These they wanted not, but they wanted a true religion, and a people instructed in it.

"The politics they erected and adorned were built like Babylon, the capital of a still older state, with

clay hardened only in the sun, and which has long become a mass of ruin undistinguished from its parent earth.

“They were without perpetuity, because they were without the elements of it. The fabric of their grandeur has crumbled down, because it was not combined with the imperishable principles of virtue; and their want of virtue resulted from their want of religion. Shall examples so frequently suggested to our recollection by the books of our boyhood, the studies of our riper years, and the very terms and allusions of our language, admonish us in vain? Yet, if reflection fail to teach us the absolute inadequacy of knowledge, however perfected, to sustain, without the basis of religion, either the virtues of private life, or the weight of national interests, let us suffer ourselves to be aroused into conviction by evidences which are ocular and palpable. Go into your public libraries, enriched by the literature of the classical States of ancient times, and see them crowded also with the mutilated marbles, brought from the fallen monuments of their greatness, and saved from the final wastes of time and barbarism, to be placed in monitory collocation with the ‘wisdom of this world,’ mocking its imbecility; as though Providence had thereby designed to teach us, that length of days is the sole gift of that wisdom whose beginning ‘is the fear of the Lord,’ and whose great lesson is to ‘depart from evil.’ Athens mourning along the galleries of our public museums over the frail ægis



of her Minerva, admonishes us to put our trust within the shadow of the impenetrable shield of the living God."

There are also—

### 3. *Ecclesiastical advantages.*

By the sanctified agency of Christian men and women, God purposes to evangelize the world. The times in which we live are remarkable for the various, persistent and insidious efforts of the advocates of error to subvert the principles of Christianity, and thus retard the universal triumphs of the truth. Where shall we look for those who shall prove themselves successful champions for our holy faith in the pulpit, and the senate, and in the various departments of science, philosophy and literature? Must we not depend upon those who have been equipped for this sublime conflict by the high advantages of Christian Education?

We come now to the consideration of our last inquiry, viz :

### III. ON WHOM DOES IT DEVOLVE TO PROVIDE THIS EDUCATION?

In reply we say it devolves—

#### 1. *On Parents.*

He who from the beginning hath set the solitary of mankind in families, hath constituted parents the primary instructors and guardians of their offspring. It is incumbent on them not only to clothe and feed their bodies, but also to clothe and feed their minds.

They are required to have their children instructed in useful knowledge according to their position in society, and the means at their command. Especially is it obligatory upon them to teach them the fear of the Lord. The divine injunction recorded in Deuteronomy, 6 chap. 6 and 7 verses, is strongly suggestive of parental duty, viz: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

This parental duty is reaffirmed in the Christian Institute, where they are taught to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." From the pressure of this responsibility, no human legislation can exonerate parents. The influence of home teaching operates through the whole life of the child. Nor does it determine with the child; it affects all with whom he may be connected in the great social fabric. Here we are reminded of a forcible illustration of this fact, by the late Rev. J. A. James: "If there be any truth in the figure by which a Nation is compared to a Pillar, we should recollect that, while individuals are the materials of which it is formed, it is the *scriptural piety of families* that constitutes the cement that holds it together, and gives to its fine form stability and durability. Let *this* be wanting, and however inherently excellent the mate-

rials, however elegant the shape, however ornamental the base, the shaft, or the capital may be, it contains in itself a principle of decay, an active cause of dilapidation and ruin."

To provide this education devolves—

2. *On the State.*

Education is one of those things which it is admissible in principle, that a Government should provide for the people. The case is one to which the reasons of the non-interference principle do not necessarily or universally extend. Among other reasons, which in our judgment justify governmental interference in the matter of public education, are the following, to which we now particularly call attention, viz: First.—The State is the acknowledged guardian of the property, rights, liberty and life of the subject, and in this capacity assumes the right to restrain vice and punish crime. Now it will be admitted that ignorance fosters vice, and leads to crime. On the principle, therefore, that "prevention is better than cure," does it not become the policy of the State, to place the benefit of education within the reach of all? Is it not more desirable to pay for schools, than for court houses and jails?

Secondly.—Upon the State it is incumbent to legislate for the development of the resources of the country, and the promotion of its general prosperity. Laws for the encouragement and protection of the mining, manufacturing, mechanical, agricultural and

commercial interests of the people, are framed and enforced. The success of these public industries, as contributing to national wealth and happiness, must largely depend upon the character and qualification of those engaged in them. By placing a Christian education within easy reach of the people, the government will instruct and develop their natural genius, and educate them up to those principles and habits of industry, economy, benevolence and integrity, which under the blessing of God, must make them intelligent, honourable, wealthy, happy and strong. Such a system of public education as we speak of, will of course justify and enforce the Christian morality it inculcates, by providing for the daily reading of the Bible in every school, as the recognized source of all just authority, and the only fountain of all true wisdom.

Lastly.—To provide this education devolves—

### 3. *On the Church.*

The Great Teacher indicated the relation of the church to this important question; when addressing His disciples, He said, "Ye are the light of the world." In various ways is the church required to illustrate this function of her existence, viz:—by the purity of living, and active goodness which should characterize her members; by the conscientious discharge of parental duty in the religious instruction of children within the hallowed enclosure of the Christian home; by faithfully supporting and zealously co-operating with the Christian ministry in their

evangelistic work ; by the organization and maintenance of Sabbath-schools ; and, by a loyal and generous support of the government in their efforts to provide schools for the children of the people, irrespective of class, colour or creed, where they may not only be taught the duties they owe to their Queen, their country, and their God, but qualified successfully to discharge them. And further—should any denomination see fit to do so—by the establishment and patronage of such seminaries of higher education as shall be in every respect conducted upon Christian principles, and where the youth may be taught the fear of the Lord, and thus educated both for time and eternity.

*In conclusion:* Allow me to ask, Has this subject engaged your attention to the extent which its importance demands ? If not, I appeal to you as philanthropists, to give it your best thought, and warmest sympathy. I appeal to you as patriots, to whom Providence has entrusted the destiny of so magnificent a country as this Canada of ours, to examine its claims and yield it your most liberal support. I appeal to you as Christians, to carry out the spirit and principles of your sacred profession, by exerting yourselves to promote to the utmost of your ability, the great work of Christian Education, upon which the immediate and eternal welfare of present and future generations, must of necessity depend. Identify yourselves in sympathy and action with Him who sought to educate

the hearts and intellects of men, and you will set in motion a train of influences which, long after you have been removed from the stage of earthly being, shall roll down the ages in glorious and saving results. In the language of Daniel Webster: "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds; if we imbue them with right principles, with the fear of God, and the love of their fellow-men, we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten through all eternity."

## THANKSGIVING.

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### SERMON XXII.

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise ; be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good.”—PSALM c. 4, 5.

**T**HANKSGIVING is the language of gratitude. Gratitude is that disposition of our nature which prompts us to recognize our benefactor, and acknowledge his kindness. It is reported of one of the dumb pupils of the Abbé Sicard, that being asked what she understood by the word, she immediately wrote, “Gratitude is the memory of the heart.” In this generous endowment the beneficence of our Creator is pleasingly apparent, since we are thereby not only enabled to appreciate the benefaction of our fellow-men, but are likewise made susceptible of His own infinite goodness. There can be no doubt that man, ere the fair symmetry of his pristine condition was marred by sin, found his chief delight in the proper exercise of this principle amid the profusion of the Divine bounty by which he was surrounded. At present there is, perhaps, no form under which his fallen nature finds expression so offensive to Deity, as the base ingratitude he manifests in all his conduct

towards Him. Among the numerous blessings accruing to him from his redemption by Jesus Christ, is the ability to love God, and in the possession and exhibition of this graciously revived affection, human gratitude reaches its sublimest development.

The bounty of Heaven conferred upon men, as individuals, justly demands their personal recognition and gratitude. Every man, therefore, who duly appreciates the gifts of a generous Providence, will have his heart, as a sacred censer, continually filled with the incense of praise; while with him every day will be a day of thanksgiving. In the exuberance of his kindness a gracious God confers blessings upon men as communities and nations, and such blessings call for national acknowledgment. History, both sacred and profane, teaches us that national forgetfulness of God has ever led to national degradation. To acknowledge the hand of God in the welfare of society, must ever be esteemed right by Christian people. Such acknowledgment is in perfect harmony with a due consideration of those more immediate and visible occasions of a nation's prosperity, generally denominated "secondary causes." The Bible, and sound common sense, are in full accord on this point, instructing us that, while it is the duty of man, whether individual or social, to plan and work as though everything depended upon himself,—it is at the same time his duty and interest to depend upon the Divine blessings for prosperity and success.



It is this relation of the great Ruler of heaven and earth to national weal which, by the wise and Christian appointment of the Lieutenant Governor of this Province, we are this day invited to consider. He calls upon us to acknowledge with gratitude to Almighty God the various good which, as a people, we are permitted to enjoy. In compliance with this reasonable recommendation, we are found redeeming this day from the ordinary engagements of secular life, and have come up to the house of the Lord to unite in the becoming service of praise. Let us seek to be imbued with the same spirit by which the Psalmist was actuated when he wrote the words we have chosen for our text, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise," &c. These words suggest three questions which may properly have our consideration this morning, viz: What blessings claim our acknowledgment? To whom should that acknowledgment be made? and How should that acknowledgment be expressed?

These inquiries commend themselves to us as rational beings, who would worship God intelligently. They are worthy of our best thought as Christians, who would give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. Let us then inquire—

I. WHAT BLESSINGS CLAIM OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO-DAY?

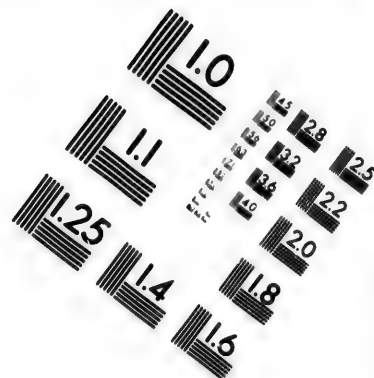
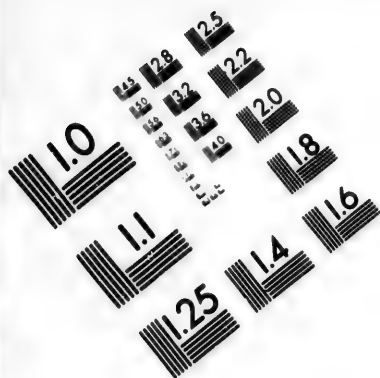
Our *civil privileges* demand our gratitude.

As British subjects it is alike our honour and hap-

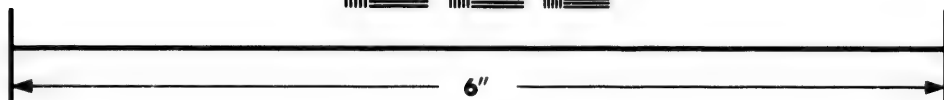
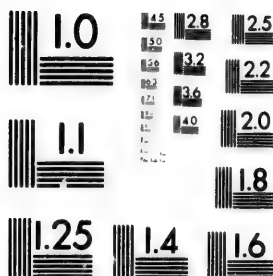
piness to live under that form of government whose flag is the cynosure of universal freedom, and whose majestic constitution, embodying the wisdom of ages, like a broad ægis, shields with equal care the representatives of wealth and want, of weakness and of power. Under the patronage of wise, mild, and impartial laws, the enterprising subject finds the path to eminence open to all, irrespective of birth or fortune, clime or color, clan or creed. Beneath the fostering hand of such a government, humane and benevolent institutions have sprung into existence, affording important aid to thousands of the variously afflicted, and evidencing the high degree of moral and social refinement distinguishing the national character.

The illustrious crown of the British Empire presses gently upon the fair brow of our mother Queen—than whom no Sovereign ever filled a throne more gracefully, or was so universally and deservedly enthroned in the heart of a nation. Nor is it an empty boast we utter when we say that the intelligence, wealth, political influence and other resources of the British nation, conspire to place her at the head of all the nations of the earth. As a Province, we are but a comparatively small member of the national body, but we rejoice to know and feel that the pulsations of the national heart cause the life-blood of constitutional health and vigor to flow through the arteries and veins of our own governmental institutions.

We have no quarrel with other systems of govern-



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ment, whether it be the sway of the autocrat, or the reign of democracy. These systems may suit well the people who prefer them. We, however, thank God for the superior good we see in our own constitution, government and laws, and cordially avow our most decided preference for those great constitutional principles which have made Britain what she is, and which, if maintained in this Dominion, will, by God's blessing, secure for it a like elevation in the scale of nations. The spirit and traditions of our national ancestry have been infused into the heart of our people—enkindling and feeding the fires of an intelligent loyalty—and I do feel it to be a fit subject for gratulation to-day, that the sentiment of our youthful Empire respecting the maintenance of our connection with the mother country is so hearty, and save in a fractional degree, so harmonious. There may be difference of opinion as to the best means of perpetuating this connection, but I am confident there are few to be found among us who would not deprecate our removal from beneath the protection of that great Power which the Ruler of the nations has advanced to the foremost rank among the empires of the world, and few who do not loyally pray that the glorious British ensign may long continue to wave over the public buildings, and harbours, and homes of our country. The advantage resulting from such connection cannot be easily estimated, and should not be too readily surrendered.

*National Peace* calls for thankfulness to-day.

From our earliest recollection we have been accustomed to pray, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!" and thus far have been exempted from participating in or even witnessing the horrors of the battle-field. Hell's demon war has driven its blood-stained chariot over other portions of the Empire; but in our times no hostile power has invaded our peaceful shores; no civil strife disturbed our domestic harmony. Only in imagination have we gazed upon scenes of carnage—listened to the clangour of the martial trumpet, the shout of the warriors, the shrieks of the wounded, and the moans of the dying. Only in imagination have we visited the homes rendered indescribably desolate by war's sad and ruthless bereavement, or heard the melancholy wail of widowed mothers, bereft parents, and fatherless children. At the present time, all the relations of the Empire are friendly and assuring. So far as we can see, it is not the interest nor the wish of any nation to quarrel with us. With an army invincible on the field, and a navy whose boast is that "Britannia rules the waves;" with ministers of unrivalled statesmanship and diplomatic skill; and composed of a loyal and valorous people, we may as a nation congratulate ourselves on the prospect we have, through the Divine favour, of lengthened peace and advancing prosperity.

The *Public Health*, and the *Public Plenty*, deserve our grateful consideration to-day.

There have been periods in our history, and within

the memory of some among us, when "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday" have prosecuted their desolating march through various portions of the Empire, decimating the population of cities and towns. During the past year cholera and fever have scourged other people, but we have been mercifully spared any such terrible visitation. In this Province a bountiful harvest has repaid the labour of the agriculturist; prosperity has characterized the various branches of trade; the several industries of the country have commanded an encouraging remuneration, and our extensive marine interests have been almost wholly exempted from those heavy disasters which have overtaken those of other places on this continent. We are fed with the finest of the wheat and with "the fatlings of the flock;" and in consideration of the luxuries and delicacies which grace the tables of the great bulk of our population, we may say, "Our mouths are filled with good things."

Our *religious advantages*, especially, should excite our gratitude to-day.

Under this head we may properly remind you of the liberty to worship God according to our own understanding of His will, than which no higher boon can be conferred upon an intelligent being. We cannot forget that it has not been always so in the history of the Church, and of our nation. Intolerant bigotry, despotic and iron-hearted atheism, blind and infuriate

superstition, enthroned on seats of power, have frequently crimsoned their hands with the blood of God's saints. It becomes us to remember that the inestimable privilege of religious toleration was purchased for us by the moral heroism of those to whom its enjoyment was denied; who attested their estimate of its value by their cheerful endurance of the severest sufferings, and the most cruel death which their mistaken enemies could invent and inflict; and who—as their spirits ascended to receive the martyr's crown—bequeathed to their successors the faith committed to their trust, not only unstained, but rendered even more sacred by their inviolable virtue. As Wesleyans let us cherish the recollection that our own Wesley, of imperishable memory, and his honoured coadjutors, the early race of Methodist preachers—who were instrumental in the hands of God in promoting that great revival of pure religion which constitutes so conspicuous a feature in the history of the last century—had to encounter a fierce storm of opposition in fulfilling their glorious mission. Thank God, the storm has blown over, the sky is now cloudless and serene, the air quiet and bland! We enjoy religious liberty!

As a people, we have our open Bibles and our holy Sabbaths. The temples of our holy religion—our holy and beautiful houses of Christian worship are not only to be seen in our cities and towns, but our villages and rural districts are beautified by these developments of an intelligent and liberal piety. Tho



important Conference of eminent representatives of Evangelical Christendom recently held in New York, has furnished abundant evidence that never was the Christian pulpit more evangelical, eloquent and effective; and never was the piety of the Church more vital, energetic and enterprising than at the present time.

Such are some of the blessings which claim our acknowledgment to-day. Inquire we next—

## II. TO WHOM SHOULD OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT BE MADE?

We propose this question for the purpose of denouncing that contemptible atheism which sometimes hesitates, and at other times absolutely refuses to recognize the supremacy of Jehovah above all earthly rule and power—and to own the entire dependence of nations as well as individuals upon His patronage and counsel for all that is essential to their welfare. Is it not also too true, that thousands who daily pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” when permitted to count and enjoy the gains of their enterprise, never dream of their indebtedness to the great Giver of all good, but in the spirit of self-sufficient pride exclaim: “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth?”

Our acknowledgments should be made to God, because He is the author of all our blessings. All our springs are in Him.     \*

Do we congratulate ourselves on the goodness of our national heritage? Are we not taught that the

Heavens rule? That it is by the ordination of the Divine will and the discretion of the Divine wisdom that kings reign and princes decree justice? Obtuse and perverted must the mental and moral perceptions of that man be, who does not see in our commanding eminence as a nation, the manifest interposition of His hand whose kingdom ruleth over all.

Are we permitted to dwell securely in our happy homes, under the auspices of a righteous peace? It is God who maketh peace in all our borders, and stilleth the noise of the enemy and the avenger. Has no deadly evil assailed us, nor any plague come nigh our dwelling? He it is who hath redeemed our life from destruction, and still holdeth our souls in life. Have our barns been filled with plenty? Have our garners been full, affording all manner of store? Have our sheep brought forth thousands, and ten thousands in our streets? Have our oxen been strong to labour? Has there been no breaking in nor going out? Has there been no complaining in our streets? Let us not forget that it is God who hath given us fruitful seasons and rain from heaven, filling our hearts with food and gladness. "The Lord preserveth man and beast." Have our ships of commerce, whose sails whiten every sea, gone and returned in safety? It hath been because He who is the confidence of them who are far off upon the sea, hath heard the cry of the mariner and brought him in peace to his desired haven. And, my dear breth-

ren, as all our temporal, so all our spiritual supplies have been divinely bestowed.

Do we enjoy religious liberty? Have we the Bible? Are our Sabbaths esteemed holy of the Lord and honourable? Are we instructed by a living ministry? Is the Church endued with the spirit of zeal, of love, of power, and of a sound mind? Then let us not attribute all this to the orthodoxy of our creed, the learning, eloquence or devotion of our ministry—but to His distinguishing goodness who hath taught us that all the good which is done in the earth, the Lord himself doeth it. Let Jehovah, therefore, be the object of our profound gratitude.

It remains for us now to inquire—

### III. HOW IS OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO BE MADE?

The Psalmist suggests the mode: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him and bless his name."

From the earliest ages of human history men were accustomed to offer unto God eucharistic sacrifices. Such offerings were laid upon the altar of the first household of our race; and in the light of sacred history we behold the ark, forsaken by the subsiding waters of the deluge, resting on the sublime summit of Ararat—while forth from within its guardian walls come the venerable Noah and his household to engage in the service of praise. With busy hands they rear high their altar, and having laid thereon their costly offering, this favoured band bending around the conse-

crated spot pour forth the reverent gratitude of their hearts to their Omnipotent Preserver. If we examine the ritual of the Jewish Church, we find numerous institutions, all designed to cherish and express the grateful memory of successive displays of the Divine goodness to the Hebrew nation. Such was the Pass-over, also the Feast of Tabernacles, and again the Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Harvest. Beside these there were votive offerings that the godly Hebrews were wont to present unto God on the occasion of their receiving some particular blessing at His hand. Thus we see that the service of praise was kept prominently before the Church of the Old Testament. We may be assured it is not less binding on ourselves, and constitutes that feature in the devotions of the Church on earth which most resembles the purer homage of the worshippers in heaven.

The right performance of such service will certainly include—

1. A sincere appreciation of the divine benefits. As we cannot properly be said to be thankful for that to which we attach no value, so neither may we be justly considered grateful to God for His conferments, if we have never studied their character, and formed some idea of their worth.

2. We should aim at glorifying God in the use we make of them.

Perhaps we could not offer a more offensive insult to a friend, than to abuse the gift he may have bestowed,

or by using that gift for his injury. All the gifts of our heavenly Father are designed to furnish us with means and motives for glorifying Him. Are we thankful for our government and our country? Let loyalty and patriotism distinguish our efforts to promote their honour and prosperity. Remembering that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation, let integrity and uprightness be the main pillars of our social character. In the enjoyment of the plenty by which we are surrounded, let us be on our guard, lest our abundance render us proud and sensual, and forgetful of God.

Do we esteem our spiritual heritage, and would we thank God for it? Then let the Bible, to which, under God, our nation owes all its greatness, be increasingly honoured and loved. Let the institutions and ordinances of our holy religion, so happily established among us, ever command our devout observance and practical support. Above all, let us respond to the appeal of benignant Heaven to-day, by the unreserved dedication of ourselves to His service, and henceforth walk before Him unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.

Thus shall gratitude exhibit itself in every department of our lives, giving its peculiar fragrance to our praise, and investing all life's service with an air of faith, purity and love. Let us seek to imitate the divine beneficence in our ministrations to our poorer brethren, who have less occasion for thankfulness

than ourselves. It is blessed to receive: it is more blessed to give. Just at this season, when we are accustomed to provide against the rigors of approaching winter, let us not forget that within the compass of our daily walks are scores of families, whose wants we may lessen, and whose sufferings we may soothe, if we cannot prevent, by such donations of fuel, bread and clothing, as many among us may so easily spare.

In conclusion: Come with me to consecrated Calvary. Behold that altar Cross! witness that costly sacrifice! "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and then, by the untold preciousness of that sacrifice, by the mortal agony of the Incarnate God, by that grand and only medium of all the honours of earth and the glories of heaven, join with me in saying from the depths of your hearts—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!"

Live in sight of that altar; so shall the life of each one of you be an uninterrupted doxology; and at length, the service of praise commenced in time, shall be resumed and perpetuated in eternity.

## CHRISTIAN FIDELITY.

### SERMON XXIII.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."—Rev. iii. 4.

**S**ARDIS in ancient times was the chief city of Asia Minor, and the renowned capital of Cræsus and the rich Lydian kings. Into this city Christianity was introduced by apostolic zeal, and among its inhabitants the gospel achieved some of its earliest triumphs. Here that church was organized, to the angel or minister of which St. John during his exile on the Isle of Patmos, was instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ, to address this brief, but comprehensive epistle. From this communication we learn, that while this church enjoyed considerable reputation among men for orthodoxy of religious sentiment and the vitality of their piety, they were regarded by that omniscient Being who seeth not as man seeth, as being in an alarmingly backslidden state. They had a name to live, but were dead. Their conduct was seriously defective, their works were not found perfect,

and even those acts of obedience which they continued to render to the law of God were performed in such an indifferent manner, and the few graces which still survived in their hearts were so cold and languid, that they are described as "being ready to die." Such was the real character of the great majority of those whose names were retained by the minister of the church in Sardis on his church roll. In the spirit of holy vigilance and God-fearing devotion to the duties of their Christian profession, they had consistently guarded against the errors, inconsistencies and imperfections of those around them; and thus kept their moral character, the drapery of their souls, undefiled? It was in reference to these few who, among the many faithless, alone remained faithful, that our blessed Redeemer expressed Himself in so discriminating and approving a manner, in his message to the pastor of this church.

Our text furnishes three general topics, upon which we purpose to remark. In the first place we have—

THE SAVIOUR'S RECOGNITION OF THE FAITHFUL IN  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments."

From this testimony we learn that—

*Holiness is the raiment of true Christians.*

By an elegant figure of speech, the moral character of men is frequently compared in the sacred writings to the robes or garments with which their outer man



may be attired. The clothing of the wicked is described as "filthy rags." David says, "violence covereth them as a garment." The saints are said to "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Their righteousness is compared to "fine linen, clean and white." In their unconverted state, the saints were "the servants of sin, and were free from (or destitute of) righteousness." In the eyes of divine purity, their moral character in its inward principles, and in its outward exhibitions, was "altogether an unclean thing." We are naturally led to enquire, in what does that change consist by which the moral character is renewed in righteousness, or those garments which are naturally impure, are made clean and white; and what are the means by which it is accomplished?

*In what does this change consist?* We answer: It is the redemption of our entire being and powers from all iniquity, and the possession in our hearts, and the illustration in our lives of all the imitable virtues of our blessed Redeemer. There are various figures employed in the Word of God to indicate the nature of this great change.

Sometimes it is described as a *purgation*. Jehovah promises to "purge away the dross" of His people; and David, in his penitential sorrow, prays: "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow!"

Again, it is styled a *change of heart*. The Psalmist

prays: "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" and by the mouth of Ezekiel the Lord promises, saying: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you!"

It is also called a *cleansing*. "Then saith Jehovah will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you!"

It is likened to a *resurrection*. "The son of man hath come that ye might have life." "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins!" This change is compared to a *new creation*. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Christians are said to be "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and St. Paul exhorts, saying: "That ye put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your minds; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Once more, it is set forth as a *purification of the whole man*. St. Paul prays for the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." But I forbear to quote more for the present, presuming that what has been already cited from the inspired testimony is sufficient to convince

every unprejudiced and ingenuous mind of the thorough and comprehensive character of Christian holiness. This entire sanctification is so minute and particularizing in its details as to identify, subject to its cleansing power, and enlist in its hallowing service, every distinctive element and attribute of our nature; and so comprehensive as to comprise all that belongs to us, and all the relations in which we stand in the universe of God. It is the perfect love of God, conjoined with the unselfish love of man, dwelling in the heart; the truth of God irradiating the understanding, and the law of God fulfilled in all the external actions of the life. In a word, "Holiness to the Lord" is the spotless raiment of the children of God. We next inquire—

*How, or by what means, is this change wrought?*

In meeting this important question, we may observe that this change invariably results from the concurrence and co-operation of those who are the subjects of it, and the God of holiness. This view may be largely supported by numerous Scripture statements. Some of these refer its accomplishment to God; and others, to the parties themselves who are so blessed. Sometimes it is referred to God; as, for instance, when David prays: "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Jesus says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." In the commemorative song of the triumphant church, the same sentiment is embodied, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us

from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

In the prayer of St. Paul for the Thessalonians, already quoted to exhibit the nature of this change, Almighty God is acknowledged as its author, for the Apostle says, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." In like manner does he refer it to the Lord when, in praying for the Christian Hebrews, he says, "Now the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." The apostle John also testifies the same, saying, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

On the other hand, this change is represented as resulting from human efforts. "Wash you, make you clean!" saith Jehovah, by Isaiah; and by Jeremiah, He exclaims, "Oh Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved! How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" So also St. James exhorts, "Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded!" St. Peter also expresses the same idea when he remarks of the Christians of his times, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit." And St. John also writes, "And every man

that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself." St. Paul exhorts, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!" And again, "Work out your own salvation!"

Do you ask, How are these seemingly opposite views of the authorship of Christian holiness compatible with each other? We answer: It is justly referrible to Divine agency, for the following reasons: In the first place, Jehovah hath provided the medium of sanctification, which is "the blood of the Lamb." By the merit of this atoning blood He cancels the sins of the believing penitent; and by the energy of that grace which is its inestimable purchase, He quickens and renews in righteousness the souls of all who sue for His mercy through the mediation of Christ.

In the second place, God calls men unto holiness, and enjoins it upon them, saying, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy!"

In the third place, the Divine Spirit is the efficient cause of holiness. Hence the holiness of believers is denominated "the sanctification of the Spirit." Christians "are washed, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The Holy Spirit makes them perfect by "working in them to will and to do that which is well-pleasing in his sight;" by the instrumentality of His own truth He enlightens and strengthens their intellectual and

moral capabilities, convinces them of sin, imparts the desire for holiness, reveals Christ in the soul, witnesses the fact of their adoption, and carries forward the great work of divine assimilation within the soul until the holy joys of earth shall be blended with the perfected bliss of the saints' eternal heaven.

This great change is also referrible to human effort.

It hath pleased Him to whom salvation belongeth to suspend the various and invaluable blessings of the Gospel upon the condition of conformity to His will. Repentance and Faith do not constitute holiness; nor are they the efficient cause of holiness; yet we are bold to affirm that the Scriptures warrant us to style them the indispensable preliminaries of salvation. Thus it appears evident, that in making men holy, the divine is harmoniously blended with human agency; and perhaps no more satisfactory putting of the matter can be reached than that of St. Paul in writing to the Philippians: "Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure!"

Now all true Christians are, to a greater or less extent, partakers of the divine holiness which God hath made it their privilege to realize and enjoy. From the least to the greatest in the kingdom of heaven—or in the true church of Christ in this world—the holiness which they possess is the same in nature, though of necessity—owing to the different stages of

their spiritual development—their holiness may widely vary in degree. In every successive stage of his spiritual progress the true Christian is holy,—even from that eventful moment when sovereign grace first registered his name among those of the regenerate in the book of life, until, as the monument of the preserving power of God, apprehended by faith, he stands forth amid the heirs of glory, a perfect man in Christ Jesus, and hears his divine Saviour say, “It is enough, come up hither !”

If therefore, as professing Christians, we say that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. “J ut if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”

Thus, brethren, holiness is the raiment of all true Christians.

From the testimony of the Saviour, we also learn that—

*Christian Faithfulness consists in keeping this raiment undefiled.*

“Thou hast a few names which have not defiled their garments.”

There is no doctrine more explicitly taught in the inspired volume, and none is more consistent with the entire scope of the scheme of salvation therein revealed than that, as all the blessings of personal salvation are obtained by faith on the part of the recipient, so

they can be retained only through his continued exercise of the same grace. "Now the just shall live by faith." This faith, so essentially connected with our spiritual life, is a vitalizing, loving, and obedient principle, working by love, and purifying the heart. It is circumspectly and sacredly abstemious from all evil in the exercise of the affections, and in the objects of pursuit; sacrificing the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life upon the altar of supreme love to God, and entire consecration to His glory. The earthly life of Christ, in which the active and passive graces of His human soul were so impressively illustrated, constitutes the elevated model which it is the duty and privilege of all His followers studiously to imitate. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk even as he walked;" "Who did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth; who went about doing good." The fact that there were but a *few* in the church at Sardis who had kept their garments undefiled, suggests that the great majority of the members had defiled theirs. How, or in what way? do you ask. They had departed from the Lord in heart, rather than in life. They had defiled their conscience by the admission of error into their minds, and by the indulgence of a slothful and unwatchful spirit. Their moral energies had declined with their sickly life. They were no longer what they had been. They had once received Christ, and obeyed the requirements of His word in the spirit of loving and



grateful Christians, but, having yielded to the temptations of the world, the flesh, or the devil, they had soiled their once fair and unspotted robes. Their condition had thus become one of imminent peril. Hear what the Saviour said respecting them! "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." By this He does not promise them a visit of mercy and salvation, but threatens them with a visit of wrath and destruction. Brethren, let him that thinketh he standeth, whose feet do now press firmly upon the rock of truth—that stable foundation laid in Zion—yes, let even such take heed lest he fall. "Be thou faithful unto death." There is no necessity that thou shouldest fall. Thy garments are unstained, and shine resplendent with the lustre of purity—thou needest never defile them. Thou mayest keep thyself unspotted from the world and sin. From our Saviour's testimony in the text, we learn—

*That Christians may retain their purity in every situation in which they may be providentially placed.*

*"Even in Sardis."*

These noble few, having diligently sought, and faithfully improved the aid of Divine grace, had successfully repelled every attempt made by their spiritual foe upon their faith and virtue, and thus kept a conscience void of offence towards God and man. Their temptations to apostacy must have been of considerable strength, since the Saviour seems to

emphasize the idea of place, saying, "*even in Sardis.*" Besides the abounding of iniquity in the lives of the non-professing part of their fellow-citizens, and their ceaseless hatred and opposition, there would be the deadening and dispiriting influence of the withering virtue, and unbecoming carelessness of the greater number of those with whom they were associated in church communion. But under these circumstances, "as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord" in the same spirit of earnest devotion to the interests of their souls which then characterized them, and with all the fervour of their first love to the Saviour, they continued to walk in Him, and thus became rooted in Him, and established in the faith. The storms of temptation which swept around them, served only to cause the roots of their faith and love to take a wider and firmer grasp of the invigorating soil of truth. Through their unflinching fidelity to their religious obligations, every fresh victory gained gave them additional prestige and moral power, by extending their experience of the requirements of the spiritual battle-field, and rendering them more expert in the use of their arms. We are aware there are those who say, "man is the creature of circumstances," or "circumstances make the man." We repudiate the sentiment as it is popularly understood, believing it to be hostile to God, and degrading to man. Is not that the deadliest atheism which shuts divine agency out of the theatre of human life as having nothing to

do directly or indirectly with the shaping of man's character and destiny? Yet the advocates of this theory, spurn what they style the unphilosophic idea that the infinite mind of Jehovah has any regard for the particulars of our birth and parentage, our education, religious advantages, or any of the associations of life. All these they consider to be merely adventitious in their character.

And then, how derogatory to the dignity of the human soul is the doctrine which represents man—whose herculean intellect has achieved such astounding feats in the realms of science and art, and by the lofty daring of whose indomitable and ever-grasping powers of thought the footprints of the great Creator have been traced throughout the stratified foundations of our globe, and far up through fields of space amid the dizzying heights and dazzling splendours of celestial glory—as being nothing more than a mere pliant, passive, and helpless football of inevitable events? We know there are such unmanly beings walking our earth, who, having little more than the shape of men, chameleon-like assume the varying colours of the changeful opinions which in succession may come under their observation. The time-serving and men-pleasing disciples of this circumstantial faith may prefer the ignoble society of such moral weathercocks: we, thank God, know and feel that He reigneth in the heavens and ruleth in the earth, and that “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” We believe

He hath created man for a nobler destiny than these would-be philosophers claim for him. By the investments of nature and the endowments of grace, He has made man capable of controlling circumstances. True, by an injudicious course of conduct, man may make every event of his life an additional link in the chain of his irreparable and eternal ruin ; but that result is not necessitated by his circumstances ; it is only the legitimate consequence of the misuse he chooses to make of them. So, on the other hand, the virtue of the truly godly has not necessarily followed from the fact that their circumstances have been of this, that, or the other description, but from their having, in the right use of the same moral power which the other abused, sought that Divine aid and blessing by which they have rendered the various peculiarities of their history subservient to their welfare. Thus it was that "even in Sardis," where the multitude ignored Divine government and human responsibility, and succumbed to the soul-defiling power of evil associations, there were a manly few who appreciated their heaven-constituted ability to guide, in the light of Divine teaching, their feet amid the irreligion, vice, and polluting sensuality of that city, so as to keep their moral drapery undefiled. Our earth, with the vast and immeasurable interests which belong unto it, has not been abandoned by the Creator to a blind and senseless fate. No: there is a God who judgeth in the earth, whose eyes behold, and whose eyelids try the

children of men! This leads us to observe another lesson taught us by the Saviour's testimony in our text, viz:

*The character and conduct of Professors of Religion are carefully inspected, and fully understood by the Saviour.*

Elsewhere He represents Himself as walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Under this chaste figure His peculiar interest in His church, and identification with her, are very strikingly emblemized. He "walks in the midst of the church," and thus would teach us that He is the constant spectator of the lives, and searcher of the hearts of all His professed followers. "I know thy works!" said He to the church in Sardis. It would appear that the pastor of this church was not aware of the sad delinquency, and consequently perilous condition of the greater number of those over whom his pastorate extended. In his book there was no distinction made between their names and those of the faithful few. The blessed Redeemer had witnessed the declension of the many; He had also noticed and been delighted with the uncompromising fidelity of the few who truly called Him Lord, and walked before Him unto all well pleasing. Though the state of the church as a whole was so offensive to Him, He takes particular pains to recognize, in terms of the most distinct and encouraging approbation, the faithful minority. Brethren, may we not learn from these facts that there is no such

thing possible as a wicked man eluding the vigilant eye of the Bishop of souls, by assuming a Christian name, and obtaining a place among the people of God; neither is it possible that the godly, however few their number, or however little accounted of by man, should ever be lost amid the multitude of the reprobate by being overlooked by that faithful Saviour, for whose glory they have dared to be singularly good. "I know my sheep," saith He, "and am known of mine." Verily, "the Lord knoweth them that are his!"

Having considered the Saviour's recognition of the Faithful in the church at Sardis, let us next observe—

THE REWARD HE PROMISES THEM.

"They shall walk with me in white."

*This Reward will consist in the highest dignity which Christ can confer.*

They shall be admitted to the most intimate companionship with Himself throughout a vast eternity. Have you not sometimes thought of the enviable privilege enjoyed by those disciples of the Saviour who were permitted to accompany Him along His earthly career, gazing upon His person, listening to the unearthly eloquence of His voice, and beholding His deeds of wisdom, love and power? Yes, this was an inexpressible honour and privilege; but, with all its desirableness, is not worthy to be compared with the dignity He here promises to the faithful in the church at Sardis. For them was reserved the high honour

of close association with Himself in His home in glory—even that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. There they shall behold not an occasioned glimpse of His divine beauty, but they shall evermore see Him as He is in all His unveiled excellence and peerless majesty. Under these circumstances, He shall honour them with a public declaration of their loyalty to Him, and receive them into the most endearing fellowship with Himself as His tried and valued friends.

*This Reward shall also consist in the most perfect joy.*

*“They shall walk with me in white.”*

Here the Saviour evidently borrows a figure from the custom of the ancients, of wearing white robes on occasions of festivity and triumph. He thus significantly teaches that the joy of the faithful in heaven will be the joy of perfect realization at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and that, having overcome by His blood, and by the word of their testimony for Jesus on the earth, they shall be honoured as the invincible soldiers of His cross, and forever partake the joy of final and complete victory over every foe. Glory be to God, though there be many adversaries, it is the privilege of every Christian so to fight the good fight of faith, as to come out of every engagement more than conqueror. Going forth in the name of Christ, the captain of his salvation, and clad with His omnipotent aid, he can ever sing—

"Gigantic lusts come forth to fight,  
I mark, disdain, and all break through;  
I tread them down in Jesus' might,  
Through Jesus, I can all things do.

I see an open door of hope;  
Legions of sins in vain oppose:  
Bold, I with Thee, my Head, march up,  
And triumph o'er a world of foes!"

The last enemy to be encountered is Death, but by faith in Him who is the resurrection and the life, the Christian dies to conquer. Faith disarms mortality and unfurls the banner of a living Saviour amid the mouldering remains of the unnumbered dead. Among those pæans of grandest conception which shall serve as outlets for the triumphant joy of the Lord's redeemed, when they shall look for the last time upon their vanquished foes, as Israel gazed upon the discomfited hosts of Egypt, will be this: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"More than conquerors at last,  
Here, they find their trials o'er."

"More than conquerors through Him that loved them," they shall reign forever with Him in glory everlasting. And oh, who can reach by loftiest flight of uninspired thought, the ever-increasing joy of the soul, before whose ever-strengthening vision the matchless glories of redeeming love shall be eternally



unfolding? Who shall presume to imagine the intensity of that sublime rapture with which the "pure in heart" shall contemplate the face of manifested deity? Surely the soul of our own Wesley must have been attuned by the spirit of those revelations of heavenly blessedness contained in the Divine Word, when he produced such lines as these—

"In loud hallelujahs they sing,  
And harmony echoes His praise;  
When lo! the celestial King  
Pours out the full light of His face;  
The joy neither angel or saint  
Can bear, so ineffably great;  
But lo! the whole company faint,  
And heaven is found at his feet."

We have contemplated the Reward of the faithful; we shall next observe—

THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THAT REWARD SHALL BE BESTOWED.

"For they are worthy." This *worthiness* may be understood as referring, in the first place, to the claim of the recipients of this Reward upon the fidelity of Jehovah to His promises.

In His sovereign mercy, Jehovah has been pleased by various promises to place Himself under moral obligation to reward with eternal life, all who fulfil those conditions, upon which He has seen fit to offer this inestimable recompense. "Blessed are they," saith the Saviour, "that do his commandments, that

they may have right" or claim "to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Allusion may have been had by the Saviour—in promising the white robe, on the condition of their worthiness—to the custom of the Jewish Sanhedrim of signifying their approval of any who might have sustained their eligibility for the sacred honours of the High-Priesthood after a special examination, by giving them a white garment. "Behold," saith Christ, "I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Again: This worthiness may be understood as referring to the moral adaptation of the faithful to the bliss and glory conferred upon them. "They are worthy," that is, they are fitted for this happiness. They are capable of enjoying it. They are worthy, or qualified to stand before the Son of man. Sin is the grand and only disqualification for heaven. No sinful being can be admitted there. Nor would heaven be a region of bliss to a sinful being. There would be no congeniality of taste and disposition. Salvation from sin on earth is the only preparative for, and real earnest of the felicity of heaven. The righteous are styled "vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto eternal glory." In the same sense in which John the Baptist used the term, do we deem it applicable here. Addressing some who came unto his baptism, that great Prophet said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for," consistent with, or becoming "repentance." A

similar meaning attaches to the term as employed by St. Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, when he writes, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." And what was the object of that calling? The Apostle supplies the answer in the same chapter, "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God," when "the Lord Jesus shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And in what does this worthiness consist? Is it not realized in the completion of the work of grace in the soul? All who shall then be the subjects of this "sanctification of the Spirit" shall at that illustrious period when Christ shall be revealed in His glory, be made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ forever and ever. Their faith and virtue, having stood the test of earth's fiery trials, shall then be found unto praise, and honour, and glory. Purified in the blood of the Lamb, from all sin—every law and faculty of their nature and being having been cleansed and subordinated to the infinite will, they shall in all the tendencies, aspirations and capabilities of their redeemed humanity, be exquisitely adapted to the felicities, honours, engagements and laws which pertain to the kingdom of glory. Hence saith Jesus, "they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

In conclusion : Allow me to address myself to you

who are professed members of the church of Christ in the language of St. Peter to the Christians of his day: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him, in peace, without spot and blameless." And further,—in consideration of the moral dangers to which you are exposed through the prevalence of evil examples, the licentiousness of living—which to an alarming extent characterizes multitudes who profess the Christian name,—and the warring winds of doctrine, contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus, which blow around you, we would earnestly reiterate the exhortation of the same Apostle: "Ye, therefore beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness! But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!" Remember, we pray you, that the flaming eyes of Him who still walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks light up the darkest chambers of your souls, and espy out all your ways. "What manner of persons ought ye therefore to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" Frequently subject your character to the faithful test of Gospel requirements, as in the presence of the heart-searching and rein-trying Saviour; and in the solemn and unsparing scrutiny of that grand assize when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts, and according to the finding then, shall fix the eternal destiny of men, saying, "Let him that is

holy be holy still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still !”

A word to any who may be still robed in the sin-defiled attire of fallen and unrenewed nature : In the presence of Almighty God, and in the assurance that we shall have to answer for it at the dreadful day of judgment, we declare unto you that ye must either turn or burn. Ye must either wash or perish in your uncleanness ; for where the purified children of God shall walk with Christ in white, ye cannot enter. “There shall in no wise enter” within the celestial city “anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.” We entreat you to come at once, with all your vileness, to the opened side of Him who was wounded for thy transgressions, saying—

“To the blest fountain of thy blood  
Incarnate God, I fly ;  
Here would I wash my guilty soul  
From sins of deepest die.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
Into thy hands I fall ;  
Be thou my strength, and righteousness,  
My Saviour, and my all.”

Thus, come to Jesus, just now ; and whatever thy past may have been, the order will go forth—“Bring forth the best robe and put it on him ! for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found.”

May God add His blessing ! Amen.

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## DELIVERANCE FROM VANITY.

### SERMON XXIV.

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way."—PSALM cxix, 37.

“**I** THOUGHT upon my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies,” is one of those records which the royal David has left respecting that important crisis in his eventful history, when, turning his back upon the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, he set out on a pilgrimage for heaven. The Psalms which he wrote may be justly regarded as the faithfully kept journal of his experience in his heavenward travel. As we read this diary, penned by this illustrious servant of God, we are not only made acquainted with the outward circumstances of his journey, but are privileged with admission into the chambers of his inmost soul, and thus learn, not only what he heard and saw, but also what he thought and felt. This Psalm would seem to be an abridged account of the greater part of his religious life, and while, as a literary production, it is remarkable for the peculiar-

ities of its composition, it must ever be more highly interesting to the pious student of the Divine Word, because of the profound spirituality of its sentiments, and the impassioned longings after a more unearthly purity, to which it gives such truly eloquent expression.

Among the numerous aspirations of David's soul after a higher and holier life, contained in this Psalm, our text finds a place. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way!"

This suggestive memorial of David's piety, offers three topics for our consideration, upon all of which it will be needful for us to expend some thought, if we are desirous to profit by his experience. We shall therefore proceed to observe—

#### I. THAT WHICH IS HERE SPOKEN OF AS "VANITY."

The word "*Vanity*," as popularly employed at the present day, signifies "pride, ostentatious display, arrogance;" but as used by the sacred writers, is descriptive of that which is "false, unsubstantial, unprofitable, unsatisfying, empty, and uncertain." Such is the import of the term as it occurs in the text. The propriety of its use, as illustrative of the nature of sin, will appear when you consider the etymology of the word "sin." To "sin," is "to miss or fail to hit a mark,"—"to err." And what is the object at which the sinner may be said to aim? Is it not happiness? Does he hit the mark? Alas!

all his laboured efforts are in vain! "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!"

Human nature has ever been wont to seek happiness in wealth, or power, or fame, or in sensual gratification and indulgences; but sought for it in vain. Hence each of these objects may be properly denominated "Vanity." It is to such objects as these that the Psalmist, in all probability, alludes in the passage under consideration. We shall offer a few remarks upon each of them.

*Wealth is Vanity.*

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Riches are the gift of God, and are designed by Him to contribute to the comfort of their possessor, and afford him means of glorifying God, by doing good to others. They were never intended to be made by man his chief good or grand object of his existence. In every instance, in which they may be so perverted and abused, dissatisfaction and disappointment are sure to be experienced. He that saith unto gold, "thou art my God!" and unto silver, "thou art my confidence!" and sacrifices his time and all other talents upon the altar of mammon, is the wretched, care-worn, laborious and ill-paid slave of a passion that is alike tyrannous in its control and insatiable in its demands. With the increase of his gains, his enjoyment is lessened, and his feverish anxiety to secure what he has, and acquire still more, is rendered more life-consuming and intense.



"High-built abundance! Heap on heap! For what?  
 To breed new wants, and beggar us the more:  
 Then make a richer scramble for the throng.  
 Dost court abundance for the sake of peace?  
 Learn and lament thy self-defeated scheme!  
 Riches enable to be richer still,  
 And richer still, what mortal can resist?  
 Thus wealth (accursed taskmaster) enjoins  
 New toils, succeeding toils, an endless train,  
 And murders peace, which taught it first to shine."

Riches are also scripturally styled "Uncertain riches."

How often, indeed, do they make themselves wings and fly away from their unsuspecting owner! Should a man be permitted to retain possession of them during his life, his hold of them must be inevitably and forever broken by the strong hand of Death; and to him who has staked his entire happiness upon his glittering hoard, neglected and insulted Heaven rebukefully speaks, saying: "Thou fool! whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

*Power is Vanity.*

"Some men," we are accustomed to say, "seem born to rule:" as though the ambitious desire for influence and power among their fellows were not a universal characteristic of the race. The man who is destitute of such aspirations is a rare exception. Where the competitors for wide dominion are so numerous, it is utterly impossible that many can achieve any extraordinary elevation above the rest of mankind.

In those rare instances in which this avarice of power has attained the largest amount of success and glory, have the mighty heroes been happy? History answers, No! Blazing with the lustre of exploits which have placed the nations at their feet, men have sought relief for their disappointed and dissatisfied spirits in the weakness of tears. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!"

*Fame is Vanity.*

By Fame we mean that applause and those distinctions which a capricious world bestows upon the successful candidates for its favours. This, in the abstract, is Vanity; but it is most emphatically so when sought for as the supreme desideratum of the soul. He who expends the fires of existence in servile devotion at the shrine of public opinion, having no higher motive than the desire to receive the heartless and fleeting plaudits of the multitude, whether he be the profound philosopher or the eminent statesman, the aspirant in the school of art or in the hall of science, the poet-laureate or the hero of a thousand battles, may, after a lengthened series of baffling disappointments, grasp the empty bubble which the world calls Fame.

"Fame is the shade of immortality,  
And in itself a shadow: Soon as caught,  
Contemned; it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.  
'And is this all?' cried Cæsar, at his height, disgusted!"

Of the countless millions who pantingly pursue it, how few attain even this mockery of glory!

"Some sink outright; o'er them, and o'er their names, the  
billows close;

To-morrow knows not they were ever born:  
Others a short memorial leave behind,  
Like a flag floating when the bark's engulfed;  
It floats a moment, and is seen no more.  
One Cæsar lives,—a thousand are forgot."

*Sensual gratifications are Vanity.*

We refer to all those low and demoralizing gratifications which arise from the inordinate indulgence of the animal passions and appetites, and are branded by the Holy Ghost as "the pleasures of sin." Such pleasures are sought in the bacchanalian revel; amid the polluting orgies of body and soul-destroying lust; in the brilliant saloons of gambling infatuation; within the glare of theatrical enticements, or in the more refined, but scarcely less exceptionable ball-rooms of the day. In such associations as these, the worst passions of human nature find a congenial atmosphere. The pleasures gathered here are as the apples of Sodom, and ill deserve the name of pleasure. Does not reason bid us—

"Give pleasure's name to nought but what hath passed  
Th'authentic seal of reason, and defies  
The tooth of time; when past, a pleasure still;  
Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,  
And doubly to be prized, as it promotes  
Our future, while it forms our present joy."

If this be sound philosophy, then the sensual gratifications of which we have spoken, are empty, worthless, and vain.

Perhaps there are some of you ready to say: "So much for your bare and unsupported assertions on the subject; in the next place, where are your arguments? By what line of evidence are you prepared to substantiate what you have advanced? To such I would say—

*Listen to the voice of Experience.* Let David speak! Behold him enthroned, holding the sceptre of wide dominion, surrounded by all the splendours of royalty. Power, wealth, honour are his, whilst no spring of earthly enjoyment lies beyond his reach. Amid all this estate of material glory, what does he say? "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity; surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee." And what is the testimony borne by his son Solomon? The monarch! the millionaire! the philosopher! the man of pleasure! What doth Solomon say? Turn to the book of Ecclesiastes, and in the second chapter you will find the record of his experience as furnished by himself, in which he tells us of the various expedients he resorted to in his search for happiness,—such as mirth, wine, great works, gardens and orchards beautified with trees and pools of water, numerous servants, large herds and flocks, abundance of gold and silver, and various treasures in which kings delight, singing men and singing women, with musical

instruments of all kinds; and, reviewing the whole, he states the result: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

Consider, also, the *total inadequacy of earthly vanities* to supply the wants of the soul. Reason and revelation both contradict the absurd idea that the soul should find the grand ultimate of its lofty and immortal powers by grovelling amongst that which is material and transient. All the finite good within the sweep of Jehovah's illimitable empire would fail to satisfy the imperious demand.

Reason, experience, and the Bible, all teach us that God alone, who only hath immortality, is adequate to fill the indefinable capacity of our moral and spiritual nature. He, alone, is the rest of the soul, and to know Him as the object of our supreme adoration, love and service—this, and this only, is immortality.

Observe likewise—

*The unprofitableness of earthly vanities in a dying hour.*

And the hour to die will sooner or later arrive in the history of all who live, for "we must needs die," and "there is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of his death, and there is no discharge in that war." It is not in the power of all that earth can boast of might, or wealth, or glory, to exempt their possessors

from the pains and degradation of our common mortality.

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour ;  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?  
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of death ?”

What saith the Spirit of God on this subject ?  
“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can, by any means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should still live forever and not see corruption.” Were it necessary, instances might be adduced exhibiting the utter destitution of those who, when their heart-strings are breaking, and death is compelling them to relinquish their earthly attachments, have nothing left them but the memory of a life of honour, wealth, worldly friendships and pleasures—all of which have ceased to possess their former power to inspire and charm—while the stern conviction of their startled and upbraiding conscience tells them that their souls' truest interest has been all neglected, and no provision made for their eternal future. How graphic the description of such a scene, as drawn by the truthful genius of Blair !—

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death !  
 To him who is at ease in his possessions !  
 Who, counting on long years of pleasures here,  
 Is quite unfurnished for that world to come !  
 In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
 But shrieks in vain ! how wishfully she looks  
 On all she's leaving, now no longer her's ?  
 A little longer, yet a little longer  
 O might she stay to wash away her stains,  
 And fit her for her passage : mournful sight !  
 Her very eyes weep blood ; and every groan  
 She heaves, is big with horror ; but the foe,  
 Like a staunch murderer steady to his purpose,  
 Pursues her close through every lane of life  
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on  
 Till forced at last to the tremendous verge  
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin !"

We need dwell no longer on this part of our subject ; let us pass on to observe—

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GODLY ARE LIABLE TO BE AFFECTED BY THE VANITIES OF EARTH.

The godly are liable to be fascinated and entangled by Vanity ; hence David prays, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity !" Earth's dazzling honours arouse their ambition ; its deceitful riches excite the avarice of their nature ; or the voluptuous gratification of the senses and appetites, so abundantly offered by the civilization of the age, eloquently appeals to all the sensuality of their being. Just in propor-

tion as they share with other men those sympathies, aspirations and passions, which in various measure belong to our common humanity, are they likely to be prejudicially influenced by these potent enticements. Should they allow themselves to be unduly influenced by them, their religious advancement will be thereby greatly retarded. Hence it is so few there are whose piety keeps pace with their temporal prosperity. Power corrupts, wealth cankers, and sinful pleasures poison the soul. By the increase of their gains, or the multiplication of their honours, a false independence of men is engendered in their breast, and from casting off a just respect for their fellows they soon become impatient of the restraints of religion, and the claims of their God. Like Jeshurun, they "wax fat and kick." The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the growth of grace within them, or, like cumbrous weights, hinder them in running the Christian course. "They that will be rich," saith St. Paul, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." "How can ye believe," asks Christ, "which receive honour, one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" St. James affirms of her that liveth in, or for pleasure, "she is dead while she liveth." St. Peter exhorts Christians to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." To the same effect writes St. John: "Love not the world, neither the things that



are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world !”

Giving due weight to such statements as these, we cannot reasonably deny that an unduly eager pursuit of earthly wealth and honours, and all pandering to the caprices of the sensuous nature, and seeking for enjoyment in the fashionable diversions of the day, are destructive of that simplicity of faith, and spirituality of mind which are essential to the life and peace of the godly. While in the world, Christians are more or less tempted to form such attachments and enter into such associations for purposes of pleasure or profit as do not at all consist with that entire consecration of heart and life to the love and service of God, which it is their acknowledged duty to cultivate and exhibit under all the vicissitudes of life. David, therefore, prays, “Quicken thou me in thy way !”

This leads us to remark upon the remaining topic of our text, viz :—

THE NECESSITY FOR DIVINE AID EXPERIENCED BY THE GODLY UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Psalmist's appeal to his God implies conscious inability to withstand, in his own strength, the pernicious influence of earthly vanities. As the fascinated bird under the paralyzing gaze of the basilisk feels

itself powerless to divert its eyes from the person of its deadly charmer, so David seems to have realized his utter helplessness in resisting the potent enticements and seductive influences of merely secular things. From this conviction he appeals to his heavenly Father for the help of His delivering hand. Even so now the sincere servants of God often feel that their souls cleave unto the dust,—that they are prone to walk by sight or sense rather than by faith, and are constantly in danger of setting up idols in their hearts. A worldly spirit attiring itself so variously, and pleading its suit so plausibly, compels them—from conscious impotency to successfully resist its pressing demands so insidiously and persistently preferred—to pray, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!”

The Psalmist’s prayer also implies, Faith that God can and will enable His children to turn away from the pursuit of earthly vanity.

This He can do by teaching them the emptiness of such things. Often when His children have set their hearts upon their increasing riches, or have been dazzled by the glare of earthly glory, or seduced from holier loves by the syren song of forbidden joys,—often has God been led, in order to wean them from their idols, to turn the tide of fortune against them. At such times, wealth has vanished in an hour; honour as quickly changed for popular contempt; and the unhealthy elation of their souls under the excitements of sensual pleasures been most unexpectedly succeeded

by the sullen melancholy of disappointed passion. Loss of property, treachery of friends, failure of health, and domestic infelicities and afflictions, are some of the various means frequently employed by their heavenly Father to answer their prayer, and save His children from certain ruin.

Sometimes He answers their prayer by elevating their thoughts and affections to spiritual enjoyments and celestial glory. He is the author of all good desires and purposes. He it is who hath wrought all their holier works in them. He also can keep them from the evil that is in the world, by inspiring them with a prayerful and watchful spirit; by strengthening their determination to persevere in well-doing, and by unveiling to the vision of their faith the brighter glories, the purer joys, and richer worth of the incorruptible inheritance which He holds in reserve for the faithful. Who would be content to limit themselves to the scanty fare of the wilderness, to whom it has been given to ascend the heights of faith's sublime Pisgah, and thence have gazed upon the ineffable beauties and golden fruitage of the celestial Canaan? Should not, will not the language of such pilgrims be?—

“The things eternal I pursue,  
A happiness beyond the view  
Of those that basely pant  
For things by nature felt and seen:  
Their honours, wealth and pleasures mean,  
I neither have nor want!”

In conclusion : Be it ours to appreciate and seek the wealth, honours and comforts of this world only in proportion as they lead us to and cherish within our hearts a holier and livelier affection for Him who is the author of every good and perfect gift ; in whose service we cannot be too devoted, and in the love of whom we cannot be guilty of excess !

Let this be the ceaseless prayer of our hearts—

“Henceforth may no profane delight  
Divide this consecrated soul ;  
Possess it Thou who hast the right,  
As Lord and Master of the whole !”

May God add His blessing ! Amen.

## DEATH CONQUERED.

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### SERMON XXV.

"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. xv. 57.

**W**HAT the immortal Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation was to the vast realm of physical science—a mystic beam of light, dispelling the vapor-like darkness which had previously veiled many portions of it from the curious gaze of the philosophy of ages, or a key whereby to unlock its cabinets of mysteries—such may Divine Revelation be regarded as being to that higher sphere of human inquiry which comprehends our moral and spiritual nature, capabilities and relationships.

How vague, gross, incorrect and uncertain the idea of the ancient heathen respecting these subjects, as embodied in the teachings of a Socrates and a Plato; of a Cicero and a Seneca! And yet we know not how much more remote from truth their conceptions would have been but for there lingering in their nature

somewhat of those impressions originally made on the mind of their distant ancestry by the communication of that Being who, because they did not like to retain Him in their knowledge, gave them up to a reprobate mind.

Without a revelation, mankind possessed of all those moral and spiritual instincts distinctive of the race, would have been the most abstruse and perplexing of enigmas to themselves; and destitute of any comfort for the past, any certainty for the present, or any confident hope for the future; would have been left to grope their dreary way through a world of unlightened toil and unsoothed suffering down to the dismal gloom of their drearier graves.

But, eternal thanksgiving to "the father of lights." He hath spoken, and in His eloquent utterance, we not only have the mystic cypher, enabling us to read correctly the otherwise illegible hieroglyphics with which He has inscribed our spiritual constitution, but are also privileged to hear of the bright and glorious destiny designed to be the blessed inheritance of all His love-redeemed offspring.

"'Tis revelation satisfies all doubt,  
And solves all mysteries except its own,  
And so illuminates the path of life,  
That fools discover it, and stray no more."

This revelation has seized and directed the hopes of all generations of the human race. By its dawning

light, patriarchs discovered the way to God and glory ; and as the day grew older, a multitude innumerable of Jewish saints rejoiced awhile in its radiance here, and then passed away to the inviting home of the pure. At length He came who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the Lord of life, and perfecting by His teaching, sufferings and triumphs, that which had been outlined by the promises, types and prophecies of all anterior ages, assured the trembling hopes of humanity by unveiling in all its truth and loveliness, an endless existence.

Amid the light flung upon the subject by the Divine Prophet in its relation to the soul and body, both for time and eternity, Saint Paul framed the incomparable argument contained in this chapter ; the triumphant conclusion of which we have selected as the theme of our present study, viz : " Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There are two leading topics suggested by these words, to which we shall direct your thoughts, viz :—

I. THE TERRIBLE ENEMY WITH WHOM HUMANITY HAS TO CONTEND.

II. THE COMPLETE VICTORY OVER THIS ENEMY WHICH CHRISTIANITY ENABLES ALL ITS SUBJECTS TO ACHIEVE.

I. THE TERRIBLE ENEMY WITH WHICH HUMANITY HAS TO CONTEND.

This enemy is Death, scripturally styled " the King of Terrors." Introduced into our world by sin,

Death has not only reigned from Adam to Moses, but from Moses to Jesus Christ, and from Jesus Christ to the present hour. He has made the globe his empire, having reared in all countries and climes the sad monuments of his might. The records of his desolating exploits crowd the pages of history. Beneath every sky his ensign gloomily waves. Among all nations his insidious agents and undaunted forces are at work. No age or sex is secure from his impressment or assault. No station, however exalted; no employment, however important; no connexion, however endearing; no endowments and resources, however vast and commanding, can effectually shield us against his thickly flying and resistless shafts.

Talk we of power? Where, short of the infinite, is power to be compared with his? Where are the giants, the Pharaohs and the Cæsars? Where the imperial sages, and statesmen, and warriors of ancient Greece and Rome? Where are the men of mighty souls whose speech or song swayed the nations of the past, and are the admiration of those of to-day? Where are they who built the pyramids, founded the cities, established the empires, and made the history of our world for over five thousand years? The power of Death has triumphed over them all. Beneath his iron rule of might they have all succumbed. They have all fallen before the sweep of his all conquering sword.



"All that tread,  
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
 That slumber in its bosom. Take the dashing  
 Of morning, and the Barcan desert force,  
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods,  
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sounds  
 Save his own dashings. Yet the dead are there ;  
 And millions in those solitudes, since first  
 The flight of years began, have laid them down  
 In the last sleep ; the dead reign there alone.

We look at man and wonder at such odds,  
 'Twixt things that were the same by birth ;  
 We look at Kings as giants of the earth ;  
 Thus giants are but pigmies to the Gods ;  
 The humblest bush and proudest oak  
 Are but of equal proof against the tender stroke.  
 Beauty and strength and wit, and valour and power  
 Have their short flourishing hour ;  
 And love to see themselves and smile,  
 And joy in their pre-eminence awhile.  
 Ev'n so in the same land,  
 Poor weeds, rich corn, gay flowers, together stand.  
 Alas ! death mows down all with an inhuman hand."

It need not surprise us that the mind of humanity,  
 excited and appalled by the universal ravages of the  
 ruthless monster, should have embodied its senti-  
 ments in terms expressive of the deepest dejection  
 and dread. Death to them was "a gloomy day,"  
 "the iron sleep," "the eternal night," a "cruel  
 hunter laying snares for men," "an horrific angel with  
 the cup of poison in his hand," "a mower with his  
 scythe, cutting down every blade in the field of human-

ity," "a mighty foe, cruel, merciless, and inexorable," "a King of Terrors treading empires in the dust." But why should it have been so? Why should it still be so? We find the correct answer in the context: "The sting of death is sin." The fact that Death is armed with this formidable weapon has made him so formidable a power to man. Why the universal dread of death? Because there is a universal sense of guilt; and there is this universal dread of guilt because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin gives Death the power to sting the unforgiven sinner. Because he compels the sinner to relinquish the pleasures, wealth, honours and friendships of earth. As a condemned culprit the sinner is driven away in his wickedness—chased out of the world.

Because when the sinner dies his opportunity to be saved terminates. Our earthly life is our only day of salvation: when that closes, the night follows in which no man can work. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowlege, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest."

Because when the sinner dies he is ushered into the presence of God to receive the punishment due to his sins. Sin indisposes men to meet God. They say unto God, "Depart from us." By them it is thought, "the farther from God the better." But when the sinner dies he is obliged to face that God whom he has hated and defied. Said one just enter-

ing the spirit world, "Oh! thou blasphemed, yet indulgent Lord God! hell is a refuge if it hides me from Thy frown."

II. THE COMPLETE VICTORY OVER THIS ENEMY WHICH CHRISTIANITY ENABLES ALL ITS SUBJECTS TO ACHIEVE.

Observe 1st. *The victory itself.* This victory is a moral, not a physical one. The Christian has to die, but he is delivered from the fear of death. He is reconciled to God. His nature is changed by Divine grace. He loves God, and seeks and enjoys communion with Him. He rejoices in the prospect of being with God forever. His love to God is stronger than the pains of dying—stronger than the agony of severed ties. He loves God for all earthly ties and comforts; but he loves God beyond them all. He anticipates a blissful and eternal reunion with all the household of God in the celestial homestead of the saints; and expects, in due time, his body too "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Observe 2nd. *The manner of its achievement.*—"God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Christ has made atonement for sin.* In honour of that atonement, God pardons all who believe on Christ.

"If sin is pardoned—we're secure,  
Death has no sting beside;  
The law gives sin its damning power,  
But Christ, our Surety, died."

*Christ is the author and exemplar of a new spiritual life.* All who receive Him as their Saviour are raised by His Spirit from the death in trespasses and sins into the life in righteousness. They are made the children of God by a new birth, and are thus constituted heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Imbibing the spirit and imitating the example of Christ, they realize that "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever."

*Christ is the resurrection and the life.* His own resurrection may be regarded as the pattern and the pledge of the resurrection of the bodies of all the saints who shall sleep in death. Wonderful change! Do some still ask, as of old, "How are the dead raised up?" To them we say, Go forth into the fields of nature, and see the sweet flowrets, which, responsive to the vitalizing kisses of the vernal sun, have awakened to a new existence, and coming forth from the earth where they have lain entombed through the dreary months of winter, lift their smiling faces in grateful gladness to the sky; and in the presence of these tiny vouchers of omnipotence, no longer deem it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead!

"Arrayed in glorious grace,  
Shall these vile bodies shine;  
And every shape and every face,  
Be heavenly and divine."

*Christ has purchased and taken possession of heaven*

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*for His people.* "I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

"Forever with the Lord,  
Amen! So let it be!  
Life from the dead is in that word,  
'Tis immortality."

Observe 3rd. *The grateful exultation which this victory is suited to inspire.*

"Thanks be to God." *This exultation is inspired here in anticipation; hence the church sings—*

"How can it be thou heavenly King,  
That thou should'st us to glory bring?  
Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,  
Decked with a never fading crown?"

The thoughts of such amazing bliss awaiting them, have endued the timid and weak with a superhuman boldness and strength. In the language of a living author, such was the experience of early Christian martyrs: "When they hid themselves beneath the earth to escape the fury of persecution, they rejoiced that the eye of infinite mercy could follow them in their dark retreat; and they looked forward to the day when they should stand crowned with glory before all the nations. When they were confined in dens beneath the crowded galleries of the ampitheatre, and heard the roar of the lions, mingled with the louder roar of one hundred thousand human voices, the

beasts and men equally impatient to have them brought forth into the bloody arena, they lifted the eye of faith unto the greater cloud of witnesses leaning over the battlements of heaven. They heeded not the shout which hailed their coming when they went forth to die, because they heard a voice from a throne higher than the thrones of earth, saying: 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.'

"In that great day of the Cæsars' glory, when imperial Rome sat throned in excess of riches and power over all nations, the noblest, purest, happiest of all her subjects were those who were scourged and imprisoned at the caprice of tyrants, who were tortured and torn in pieces to make a Roman holiday, and whose only support and consolation were drawn from the hope of a better life to come."

Said an eminent American minister when dying: "Be quiet, my son? Be quiet, my son? No! No! If I had the voice of an angel, I would arouse the inhabitants of Baltimore for the purpose of telling them of the joys of redeeming love. Victory! Victory! Victory, through the blood of the Lamb!"

*The exultation is inspired hereafter, when the victory has been accomplished:—*

"But O when that last conflict's o'er,  
And I am chained to earth no more;  
With what glad accents shall I rise,  
To join the music of the skies."

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. And he shall be destroyed! When Death shall be swallowed up in victory; when this vast grave-yard of earth shall have yielded up its requickened dead, and purified by fire, and clothed with more than primeval beauty roll on in its eternal round, the dwelling place of righteousness and love,—then shall the redeemed, robed with immortality, and radiant with the smile of God, review the past, and triumphantly exclaim, “O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

This subject supplies the strongest encouragement to fidelity and perseverance in the Christian life. From the height of this sublime argument the Apostle descends, and for what purpose? To array himself in holiday attire, and abandon himself to inglorious inaction? No! No! But to gird up the loins of his mind, and bend himself to more energetic exertion in his holy toil. To sound the rallying and stimulating cry throughout the moral vineyard: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

The unconverted are in circumstances to decide in what character they will make their exit out of the world, “whether *us* victors or victims!” Which shall it be? I cannot wish for you all any higher good



destroyed is Death.  
 In Death shall be  
 A vast grave-yard  
 Of quickened dead,  
 With more than  
 Eternal round, the  
 Love,—then shall  
 Glory, and radiant  
 Past, and trium-  
 Phs thy sting? O  
 Be to God which  
 And Jesus Christ!"

Encouragement  
 Of Christian life.  
 In the Apostle  
 To array himself  
 In self to inglorious  
 Up the loins of  
 Energetic exer-  
 In rallying and  
 Moral vineyard:  
 Be ye steadfast,  
 In the work of the  
 Your labour is not

ces to decide in  
 Exit out of the  
 Which shall  
 y higher good

than that, when you come to die, your experience  
 may find expression in the language of the poet—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame!  
 Quit, O quit, this mortal frame;  
 Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,  
 O the pain, the bliss of dying!  
 Cease fond nature, cease thy strife,  
 And let me languish into life.

Hark, they whisper; angels say,  
 Sister spirit come away!  
 What is this absorbs me quite  
 Steals my senses, shuts my sight;  
 Drowns my spirits, draws my breath;  
 Tell me my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears!  
 Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears  
 With sounds seraphic ring;  
 Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!  
 O Grave!—where is thy victory?  
 O Death!—where is thy sting?"